645
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to the Mogho Naba: "Since I have come to you, give the first rank to this man. I will show him what he must do to please you. He will be the Ouidi Naba."

A man from Tansobongo, having heard that the Ouidi Naba was living in the greatest ease, came to see him. He, too, was a handsome youth. He was presented to the Mogho Naba (Naba Oubri) by the Gounga Naba who proposed the young man's appointment as second minister, the Larrhallé Naba, and reserved for himself the post of third minister.

So it came about that the Gounga Naba is the emperor's third minister.

645 place where there were once many goumsé (gounga, silk-cotton tree); hence, his name.

[126] He is a brother-in-arms of the Tansoba and always accompanied him to war, where he chose death rather than defeat, especially if the Tansoba had been killed.

644 (d) Baloum Naba, the chief steward of the palace and chief servitor of the Mogho Naba. He never goes to war, but remains always at the side of the Mogho Naba. It is his duty to carry out

● [181] [65] sacrifices, such as killing the chickens or livestock offered to the manes or to the spirits when such sacrifices are prescribed by the soothsayers or other charlatans for the health and well-being of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Kamsaogho Naba, formerly accompanied the Tansoba to

[839] war. The Kamsaogho Naba is a eunuch, and for this reason he is commonly called Mogho Naba na poug'tiéma, "first wife of the Mogho Naba."

Other personages (not ministers). (a) Samandé Naba, in charge of all of the people in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba and a brother-in-arms of the Larrhallé Naba.

644 687 661 (b) Poé Naba, formerly the confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba. His duty, carried out by magical practices, was to denounce those wives or persons guilty of treason or of

651 [72] (c) Fishing. Fishing in the larger water holes could take
226 place only by authorization of the canton chiefs. The day on
634 which fishing took place was treated as a holiday. All the young men in the village and their neighbors, even if the latter did not belong to the canton, came out on the day set by the canton chief and fished for the benefit of the naba. All large fish were reserved for him, and only the small ones were left to the fishermen.

This practice still prevails.

776 Other common laws. Many deities are worshipped by the
782 Mossi. Groves, fields, mountains, etc., all have their "god."
661 It often happens that the naba (canton chief), at the behest of the soothsayers, offers an animal. This may be a sheep, a goat, or even a cow, and it is offered to one or another of the deities, either for his personal interests or for those of his people, or perhaps to ask for rain. The naba dispatches some sogoné [servitor] or samand'kamba [people of the outer courtyard] to one of the villages in his canton to find a victim. The animal is taken without its owner having any right to complain or to ask for compensation. Is there not a Mossi saying to the effect, Talagh-gounda
[538] Naba'gninga the serf raises livestock for the benefit of his naba)"?

For sacrifices prescribed for the Mogho Naba, the animals are provided either by the inhabitants of the [73] town of Ouagadougou and its environs or by the canton chiefs.

Labor Service Customarily Required of the Mossi on Behalf of their Chiefs

651 Forced labor was used to cultivate the fields of the naba and to repair or construct their houses.

647 The Mogho Naba. (a) Cultivation of fields. The duty of
651 cultivating the fields of the Mogho Naba fell entirely on the Bilbalsé;
241 the residents of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba) and on all former servitors and descendants of former servitors. The Kam Naba (chief of the young men), charged with assembling the workers, had a crier announce in all the important markets that on such-and-such a day the Bilbalsé were to assemble in the emperor's

653 considered forced labor since this work is done in the common interest.

[77] Installation of a Market

366 787 782 As in many other circumstances, the Mossi first consult soothsayers when they desire to establish a market. The Moaga [singular of Mossi] is convinced that invisible spirits are everywhere, behind his house, under the trees, in the fields and groves, and even in uninhabited places, so above all he is anxious to obtain the good will of these beings whose anger is fearful. It is, therefore, only after consulting several soothsayers, who use various types of divination (with cowries, stones, sand, etc.), that the village chief has chickens and livestock sacrificed on the site where he wishes to set up the new market. The naba chooses two or three candidates from among his followers, and the soothsayers are required to indicate which of these has the best prospect of good fortune and a promising future. This person will be the one who performs the sacrifice. The victims are furnished, in theory, by the village or canton chief, unless he decides to call on the populace. In this case, a small assessment is made on some of the notables, and the proceeds are used to buy chickens, a goat, or a sheep.

366 782 In any event, the canton chief is not permitted to appropriate the animals in the villages or sections under his jurisdiction as would be done in the case of sacrifices offered for the general welfare of the country.

The individual chosen by the bagba [soothsayers] presents himself at the site, accompanied by a more or less [78] impressive crowd, depending on the importance of the village. The women bring fritters and other provisions.

The following sacramental words are pronounced: "Ya sida Ting' Naba yeta nan lougoul dagh, Naba zidwendé Bad kom deghin kon zigh tinghin damba, tib kon yaramba, tib regh kon saramba, tiya gnimassem lad ratta, tib regh lass zim-yellé, tiya nogoam la tigue koada soaba lad zoïta." A literal translation follows. "This is true, the canton chief wishes to install a market on this spot. Oh God, the Sun, here are water and animals for zigh tinghin damba (people who died childless), for grandparents and ancestors. We ask

366 for good fortune and health. Prevent all bloodshed in this market.
782 We also fear those who are quarrelsome and those who talk too much, those who provoke disorder." The chicken is the first victim to be sacrificed, and if the offering is accepted, it must have first fallen on its back and only then turned over face downward (this means that the gods of the place will protect the naba and the persons who will frequent the market). Next the goat or sheep is killed.

The new market is opened immediately after the sacrifice. Those present buy the women's fritters. Ordinarily, Mossi markets
[443] are held every three days. The news travels rapidly that such-and-such a village has a market, and thus the business of the market gradually grows.

366 Collection of fees. It is only later on, one or even two years after the installation of his new market and when [79] it is successful, that the canton chief appoints a yaguinga (grandson, or, more
651 [601] accurately in native terms, a sister's son (nephew)or son's son (grandson), of the naba or of a member of his family) or a Gourounsi captive to act as collector of market fees. (We shall list below the various fees for a place in the market as they were collected for the benefit of the naba before the arrival of the French.)

366 Transfer of the market. Upon the death of a naba (the emperor, a vassal chief, or even the chief of the village where the market is held), the market is temporarily set up in another place. In large towns, such as Ouagadougou, for example, there may be as many markets as there are sections. These temporary markets are called kim'dagha (market of the kimsé, that is, of the deceased).

366 When a new naba has been named, the market is moved back
782 to its former site and the reinstallation calls for new sacrifices of fowl and livestock. That was why in 1897, when the market at Ouagadougou was being re-established, the emperor asked the captain who was in command of the post to provide a cow to be sacrificed along with a sheep and a rooster which he himself provided.

366 Likewise, whenever a hyena has run through the market (its
825 presence is discovered either by the tracks left by the animal or by consulting the soothsayers), just as happens when a naba dies, the
787 market must be moved elsewhere for a few days. It is believed that if [80] a brawl should occur after a hyena had passed through the market, there would certainly be a death.

567 Were slaves part of an estate? Among the Mossi, the wives
428 are part of an estate on the same footing as the rest of the property
562 of the deceased. The same thing applies to the captives (yemsé) and dogyiri (house slaves) who constitute and integral part of the estate. They constitute a patrimony to be handed down from father to son in accordance with the customary order of succession. They remain the exclusive property of the legitimate heir and are not distributed as are the wives of the deceased.

[97] Chapter 6

Djiba Naba, Crown Prince of the Mossi Empire

Preliminary Remarks

644 In writing on this subject we have not tried to ascertain whether the canton of Djiba was once independent or whether it was under the direct authority of the Mogho Naba.

At the outbreak of the World War in 1914 the Djiba Naba, a brother of the present emperor, Naba Kom, was drafted into the army, and another brother had to be appointed to take his place. The latter's administration was in many ways unsatisfactory, so when the Djiba Naba, on his return from the front, had to be sent to Doulougou to replace a deceased son of Naba Wobgo, the Mogho Naba retained direct authority over the canton of Djiba. Meanwhile, his eldest son had returned from Tunis and had been officially named the chief of Djiba, but he had had to leave again for military service at Salonika. Thus, it can be said that even before the canton of Djiba had been made the prerogative of the eldest son of Naba Zombré, it had already been under the latter's authority.

It was during the reign of Naba Zombré, twenty-third Mogho Naba, that the eldest son of the emperor was given jurisdiction over the canton of Djiba. Naba Zombré, after Naba Niandeffo, had one of the longest reigns in the history of the country. He actually ruled for sixty years.

643 [98] An old tradition requires an emperor who has ruled for
782 thirty years to go to Oubritenga to celebrate zom'bika (literally,

643 "to mount the bika").

782 Bika. When the emperor goes to Oubritenga, a large pit is dug in which all sorts of provisions are placed and, finally, a living man. Poles cover the opening of the tomb where the suffocated man lies, and the whole thing is covered with earth. A throne (guéré) is placed on the grave, and it is there that the emperor -- with little ceremony -- receives the faithful during his stay at Oubritenga. In carrying out this practice, the emperor is considered as having died and then come to life again. Hence, when he returns to Ouagadougou, after an absence which may last for years, he is welcomed by the populace with the greatest enthusiasm, and he must carry out all sorts of customary obligations just as he did at the beginning of his reign.

This custom is of course bound to disappear. In any event, if it were still an obligatory ceremony today, the man would no doubt be replaced by a rooster.

643 644 Naba Zombré went to Oubritenga to mount the bika and remained there for three years. His eldest son acted for him at Ouagadougou and in the process acquired some fame and the esteem of the populace.

When his father returned, it was obviously necessary to bestow upon this prince, who had already tasted the "joys" of ruling and developed a real talent for command, a post of real distinction. Djiba was chosen. From that day on, [99] as soon as the eldest son of the Mogho Naba reaches the age of discretion, he is appointed Djiba Naba. It is thus understandable that Naba Kom, enthroned at an early age, was much disturbed when two of his sons were sent to Senegal and then to Tunisia.

644 The appointment of the Djiba Naba differs very little from that of other canton chiefs, but this naba has certain obligations which will be discussed below.

Before Appointment

644 782 Before his appointment, the crown prince of the Mossi empire first proceeds to the village of Zango where he must remain for a week. He must bring with him a sheep, a white rooster, and a cow which are to be given to the village chief for use in a sacrifice to

644 tenpelem (the earth) in order that he may have health, happiness,
782 etc. In addition, he provides a bar of salt which is to be shared among the old women.

As he passes through Nonsin, he gives a sheep, a white rooster, and some salt for a similar sacrifice.

644 On the seventh day he returns to Ouagadougou and stops at Bilbalogo, the home of the Kam Naba (chief of the young men), whose guest he becomes. The Mogho Naba informs his ministers, and the day is set for the appointment.

The customary formalities are nearly identical with those required for the appointment of canton chiefs (kombemba).

[100] After Appointment

On the day following his appointment, the Djiba Naba calls upon his father. A cushion (nagpouré) is placed near a shed in the emperor's courtyard at the foot of a special stake called the "zandaogo of the Djiba Naba." The Djiba Naba becomes the guest of the Gounga Naba, in whose section he will henceforth stay whenever he comes to Ouagadougou. (At the present time, because of the enmity between the emperor and his brothers, the Djiba Naba stays at Kamsaoghin [section of the Kamsaogho Naba], not far from his father's house.)

644 He then has to call upon his father's ministers, and precedence
557 requires him to visit the Ouidi Naba, the prime minister, first. As soon as the latter is notified of the arrival of the Djiba Naba, he offers him a sheep, some dam (beer) and some kola nuts.

Then the crown prince goes to the Larrhallé Naba, who is required to present him with the same gifts, and thence to the Kamsogo Naba, chief eunuch, where the same honors are rendered to him and where he is also given a sheep, beer, and kola nuts.

He next calls upon the Gounga Naba, the Poé Naba, the Samande Naba and, finally, the Baloum Naba, from whom he receives many gifts.

On the third day he completes his visits by calling upon the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou. There he is offered water containing [millet] flour and honey, as well as kola nuts.

644 554 576 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a customary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 782 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 788 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, [888] that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers.

644 788 431 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 788 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 304 681 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers, and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

796 that day there is dam (beer) in every house and abundant meat,
527 and the inhabitants of nearby villages come to the festivities.

Here we shall describe only the two major festivals, tinsé and basgha.

Tinsé (Mossi Ritual Festival), or Naba Oubri Ma Kouré (The Funeral of Naba Oubri's Mother)

796 Origin. Naba Oubri, son of Zoungrana and [147] founder of
769 the Ouagadougou dynasty, gave his mother a very impressive kouré (funeral). The kouré took on the appearance of a great festival because of the large number of animals sacrificed, the generous supply of food, and the great quantity of beer (dam) prepared. Since Oubri was very powerful, he ordered that the anniversary of his mother's funeral should be celebrated every year, even after his death. His mother was Pogh'toe Hinga (literally, "bearded woman").

For this reason and also to obtain health for his people and abundant rain for their crops, the Mogho Naba still quite regularly celebrates this annual festival known as tinsé (from tinga "earth"). There is no set date for it; it is celebrated whenever possible, usually after the harvest.

796 Preparatory sacrifices. Before setting the date for the tinsé,
769 the Mogho Naba has livestock (cows, sheep) and roosters killed
●782 on the tombs of his predecessors.

According to precedence, the sacrifices begin with Naba Zoungrana, Oubri's father, whose tomb is at Komtoega in the circle of Tenkodogo. The Mogho Naba sends a cow to the Loumbi-Raogo Naba to be sacrificed on the tomb of Naba Oubri. Oubriyaogo Naba (the guardian of Oubri's tomb) has the duty of sacrificing the animal.

The other animals are sacrificed by the Ouagadougou Naba, representing the family of the Ninissi (first [148] inhabitants of the country). He is accompanied by the eunuchs who are the guardians of the tombs (yad'nanamsé).

In order to honor emperors whose tombs are in various parts of the colony, representatives of the Mogho Naba are sent out with

796 sacrificial animals, and they are required to celebrate the festi-
769 val in these villages before returning to Ouagadougou.
782 In the old days the animals destined to be sacrificed were captured in the cantons by horsemen assigned to that duty. Today, however, the Mogho Naba requests his vassals to supply them.

It should be noted that the following Peulh chiefs provide cattle of their own volition and without any compulsion: Komtam Silmanaba, Gombogo Silminaba, Kourgou Silminaba, and Barkoundba Silminaba.

796 Setting the date for the ceremony. A week after the sacrifices
769 the emperor summons the Tansoba (war minister) or, if he cannot appear (sickness or some other chance reason), the Konkosé Naba. This personage must reply to the summons on the day he receives it.

796 The king then assembles his principal ministers and sets the
769 date for the celebration of the tinsé, twenty or twenty-one days
211 ahead. The Mogho Naba hands the Tansoba several knotted ropes (yoda) which are to be distributed by him to the following chiefs: [149] Sapone Naba, Tuili Naba, and Loumbila Naba.

The last-named chief hands his rope over to the Dapelgo Naba and to the Méguet Naba.

There are as many knots in the rope as there are days remaining until the festival.

As soon as the Tansoba has handed over the ropes, he must immediately return to his village.

The persons who have received the ropes are required to transmit them to the kombemba (plural of kombéré, canton chief) who untie a knot each day.

796 Celebration of the festival. Early on the day of the ceremony,
769 a Friday (arzouma), the ministers and other court officials present themselves before the king to wish him welcome (tabo).

796 The Mogho Naba presents a loaf of salt (yamss'néré, literally
769 "salt millstone") which is to be divided among the following digni-
263 taries: Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamsaongho Naba, Bougretenga Naba, Benga Naba, Poé Naba, Tampouf Naba, Bend'Naba, and their followers.

Half of a loaf of salt is also offered to the Baloum Naba, Dapoya Naba, Samandé Naba, and Wedranga Naba.

The Basgha of the Mogho Naba, or the Nights the Emperor M'ba (Rarengma) Sleeps Away from Home

(May my father not arrive before I do.)

769 782 796 The basgha. Before making use of his newly harvested crops, the Moaga ikanda (married man, head of a family) is obligated to offer this new produce to his ancestors. Therefore, he has dam (dolo, millet beer) prepared with the large red [153] millet, already sprouted, and cakes made with the millet or the sorghum. He kills chickens and a goat, or a ram, and invites his neighbors and relatives to the feast. He is convinced that the manes of his ancestors share the feast.

The emperor of the Mossi is no exception to this rule. The basgha of the Mogho Naba is celebrated with more pomp, and we shall describe it briefly below.

It should first be noted that there is no particular date set by custom for the basgha, either for the Mogho Naba or for the ordinary Moaga. Everyone celebrates it whenever he can after the harvest.

491 653 The sotasgo (completion of the road). Before the French came and the administration took over road building, each minister had a road or, more accurately, a broad path which led straight to the king's courtyard and which had to be maintained by the minister. Since everyone is busy in the fields during the winter months, it is easily understandable that the roads are somewhat neglected during that season. When the Mogho Naba decides to put everything to rights with his ancestors, he notifies the Ouidi Naba, his first minister, who sends word to the other ministers that they must clear their soyan (from soré, "path"). The ministers order the inhabitants of their respective sections to do the work, but put off completing the last stretch leading into the courtyard, samandé, [154] until the date for sotasgo is known.

653 Sotasgo takes place on a Saturday.

The Ouidi Naba makes a large pile of several loads of millet (kaguindi) and chooses about forty strong young men to carry it into the court of the king. His colleagues (Larrhallé Naba, Gounga

796 769 Friday night he stays at the home of Bangr'Naba Sambo. Very early Saturday morning he returns home in time to be present when the Bend'Naba (chief of the drummers) comes to wish him a happy new year and a long life and to pray that Wenam (God) will spare him to [156] offer many more bascé (plural of basgha) in honor of his predecessors.

[431] It goes without saying that during the nights spent away from home the emperor receives many visitors and substantial gifts. The persons at whose homes he spends the night naturally give him the warmest possible welcome.

Preparatory sacrifices. These are performed inside the house of the Mogho Naba, and the details are known only to the following four persons: Mogho Naba, Emperor of the Mossi; Baloum Naba, chief steward and chief of pages; Zussoba Kassanga, chief eunuch and guardian of the harem; the pugtiéma, the first wife of the Mogho Naba.

796 769 782 It is known that animals are sacrificed, with the Mogho Naba himself holding the victim and pronouncing the sacramental words. Perhaps there is also worship of certain sacred fetishes. In any event, we are convinced that there is nothing involved in the ceremony which is contrary to the principles of French civilization since there is no human sacrifice. We should have liked very much to describe these ancient practices, but the secret has been well kept.

796 769 533 Celebration of basgha. As soon as the Mogho Naba appears in front of the zango (antechamber), the Bend' Naba beats a drum while calling the names of deceased naba, beginning with Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty. [157]

As soon as the Bend'Naba stops playing, he and his followers are served sagbo (millet cakes), mouf (rice), dam (millet beer), and nemdo (meat).

796 769 [554] Likewise, the ministers and other court officials who come to greet tabo (the new year) are given dam, sagbo, rice, and meat by the Mogho Naba. The food is distributed to the dignitaries in the order of precedence, and the rest is reserved for the Bilbalessé and other followers of the ministers.

[576] About eight-thirty, the ministers and court officials say wennatassé, "God be with us," which means good bye, and then they return home.

843 pregnancy in a woman. It is also known that the woman will give birth in nine months, but since it is impossible to be sure of the date of delivery, the pregnant woman is watched over constantly and is under the surveillance of the old women. In a general way, nature is allowed to take its course, but some people prefer to consult the soothsayers and the priests and to give alms and sacrifices [781] to avoid a miscarriage. [782]

During pregnancy, women are forbidden to eat honey and, in general, any sweet foods.

Seguene-vando (from seguene, "to wear a skirt," and vando, "leaves, branches"). A few months after the cessation of menstruation, the pregnant woman is sent into the kim-dogo (hut of the kimsé, manes of the ancestors) at the home of the family elder. There she is completely disrobed, and branches are tied around her loins.

844 Delivery. Delivery takes place in the woman's own hut. There is no special preparation. [190] Old women who have had much practice help the mother while others heat water in which to cleanse the newborn child of all impurities.

No one except the old women is present during the delivery. [842] Women who have not yet borne children are sent away, and for good reason since the sight of the birth process might make them sterile.

Finally, if the afterbirth does not come out at the time of birth or soon after, there are certain special measures taken to hasten its emergence.

846 Three or four days after the delivery, depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl, the mother, who has so far remained indoors, goes out for the first time.

She carries a sickle to ward off ghosts and other evil spirits.

The new mother's co-wives and relatives bring her safandé (soap), kamé (karite butter), and kalgo (soumbala); others give her cowries. The father has a sheep or rooster killed and a millet cake prepared.

The woman who acted as midwife is sent a ball of sagbo (millet mush) and a chicken leg. The heads of the mother and child are [307] partially shaved, and there is nothing else to do but to choose a name for the child. [191]

553 Choice of a name. Among the Mossi, a child's personal name depends on circumstances which preceded the birth or on an important

553 event associated with it. We shall classify children under two headings: 1) ordinary children; 2) children especially sought.

The second category refers to children born after their parents have consulted the soothsayers, given alms and sacrifices, or employed other magical procedures.

Since the ordinary child is regarded as a spontaneous gift of God, his name is given by the father's close relatives unless some recent or remote event requires a name having particular significance.

551 Some examples of common ordinary names are Bila and Poko.

Names having special meanings are illustrated by the following examples.

Passektale (from passek, "insufficient," and talé, "resentment, hatred") means "I do not know what has caused the hatred which is felt for me."

Paratsida (from paraté, "to be unwilling," and sida, "truth") means "enemy of truth," a name intimating that people dislike the truth.

Dimpougoubnoma (literally, dima, "great chief, king"; pougbo, "to follow"; and noma, "profitable, good") is a name given to a child born of a mother given by a chief or one whose father has been given some important gift by a chief just before the child's birth.

842 [192] If a woman has no children after several years, the husband consults the soothsayers, makes offerings and sacrifices, employs
●782 charms, and finally resorts to the tinsé ([sing.] tinkougri, from tinga, "earth," and kougri, "stone") or to the tiga (fetish tree). The woman goes with her husband to the possessor of the god. They take a rooster and some cowries. After they explain the object of their visit, the rooster is killed by the priest, and if the offering is accepted, the couple is dismissed with a formal promise that their prayers will be answered.

553 If, in due course, the wife is delivered of a child, the baby must be named Tinga, and his brothers and sisters will be named Timbila, Timpoko, etc., or if the tiga was appealed to, the baby must be called Tiga, and his siblings, Tibila, Tipoko, etc.

715 It also happens that after successive births, the babies die. Since
553 the Mossi, as we have noted, believe in reincarnation, they assume --

775 that the same baby is returning. So, in order to induce him to
553 remain on earth, they give him a significant name.

One of these is Yewayan (literally, "one who has returned"), meaning "Here he is, back again; it is he once more, and we recognize him."

The same name is used for all members of the same family.

304 Scars. When a child is a year or two old, the family calls in an old woman who draws more or less straight lines on his face (cheeks, chin, forehead, even the nose) with a razor. These marks vary according to region and are not [193] the same, for example, at Kaya as at Ouagadougou.

The design used most often, however, has three straight lines from forehead to chin and one or two horizontal lines running across the nose and joining the vertical lines on the cheeks.

853 Feeding. If a mother does not have enough milk, she goes very early in the morning to a tree, for example, the kamsaongo
782 or wédega (of the family of gohine lianas), to ask for milk. She falls to her knees, and believing that she is addressing a living person, she makes her request humbly, but with what faith! It appears that the prayer is often granted, but the woman must never again go under the tree or she will lose her milk.

853 The question of choosing a nurse does not arise in Mossi
604 country unless the mother dies. In that case, the little orphan is entrusted to a sister of the child's father. If she has been a mother, she too goes to the tree to ask for milk, as described above, even if her most recent delivery occurred years before. Finally, if the child thus nursed is a girl and survives, she becomes the property of her father's sister who will give her in marriage, later on, to the suitor of her choice.

III. Death

764 The importance of funeral ceremonies depends on the age and
554 rank of the deceased.

Nitiema (aged persons). Upon the death of an [194] old man or woman, all the relatives who live in the village are assembled.

342 Of course, like all European houses in the region under dis-
177 cussion, these buildings are, unfortunately, made of mud bricks, but is that not the rule in French West Africa?

342 In the homes of those two ministers of the emperor who are most advanced, the reception rooms are arranged in such a way that callers benefit from a constant flow of fresh air through large openings. During periods of extreme heat, a punkah operated [417] by a sogoné in the middle [216] of the room provides air for the panting visitors. The wall, always whitewashed with kaolin, bears an [353] an advertisement or two, the picture of an important chief, or perhaps some family photographs, which enliven the apartments a bit. All of this shows a real anxiety on the part of the chiefs to develop along the lines of progress and civilization.

In recent years, some of the notables at Ouagadougou have built houses with clay roofs, not so much to live in as to safeguard their family valuables against fire and theft.

Finally, it should be noted that custom requires every new naba for the first three years of his reign to live in songodo, straw huts, which will be described later. Only then may he build with clay.

Dwellings of Mossi Subjects

342 Temporary dwelling. Before building his conjugal hut, the
787 young man consults a soothsayer in order to make sure that the site chosen is not haunted by evil spirits and that he will have happiness and good fortune if he lives there.

342 Even if the soothsayer finds nothing especially alarming about
● 787 the site, he always orders a chicken or other animal to be sacrificed or alms to be given. The young man arranges with the village elder [217] or, if he is a [Nioniosse], with the Tingsoba (from tenga "earth," and soba, "master"), to sacrifice the victim.

The Tingsoba goes to the site and calls for two small gourds which contain ordinary water and water mixed with flour, respectively. He invokes all his ancestors and pours the water on the ground, praying God to accept it for His wife, Tinga, who is absorbing it. Then he kills the chicken, saying: "On -- on,

342 mamé ka koud'ti y a niesmé yé ya saramb' boumbou, yaramb' boumbou, ti oua ta mamé" (which means something to this effect, "Accept the offering which I present in the name of X.... He appealed to me because I am the Tingsoba of the village. I do not consider myself to be more able than the other villagers, but this ceremony is a matter concerning our ancestors and I inherited the position from my predecessors").

782

The chicken is held with its feet up and head down, so that the blood mixes with the water having flour in it, and then it is thrown a short distance away. If the offering is accepted, the victim will fall on its back. Then it is hastily picked up, and a few feathers are pulled out and stuck into the slightly coagulated blood.

The chicken is given to the children to be plucked and roasted on the fire without salt or pepper. A leg is offered to the Tingsoba, and the rest of the meat is eaten by the family of the young man.

Part of the liver (saonré), however, is thrown onto the place of the sacrifice and thus offered to the spirits, [218] the invisible inhabitants of the place, so they will look favorably on the new household and help the couple to have children.

It should be noted that the Tingsoba may turn in any direction to make the sacrifice since no particular orientation is required.

342 A young husband's temporary dwelling is a simple straw hut made of the branches of a tree called randega. The branches are stuck into the ground, tied together at the top, walled around the base with Mossi mats (sougzakpinri), and roofed with thatch.

Permanent dwelling. After a year in the temporary dwelling the young man starts to build his permanent home if his means allow it. This is a group of clay huts, joined to each other by more or less even walls.

The earth must first be dug up, and the soil removed from the excavation must be dampened and molded into balls of mortar. A circle is laid out on the site by means of a string tied to a central stake. The foundation is built to a depth of about twenty centimeters. Mortar is put on the foundation, and construction of the walls is begun. These are always circular in form, and their dimensions vary. The mortar is allowed to dry before the work

535 or there will be falls which are inevitable when one of the girls is too robust.

535 539 Here, chosen at random, is one of the kiguibtobo songs:

M'Ma ho, ka M'Ma warla y e
Lebin wa regh'big' tim boudguin
n'di Mossa yarbate ribo

"Mother, oh, my mother,
Come quickly and take my child,
For I am going to the next village
To consume pitilessly the goods of
these wretched Mossé." (1)

1. Mossi.

[241] Chapter 16

Agriculture

241 787 Selection of land to be tilled. As he is wont to do in all important matters, the Moaga entrusts to a soothsayer the responsibility of choosing the land to be cultivated. In actual fact, he chooses it himself, but the diviner must tell him whether or not it is haunted by spirits and what sacrifices are advisable to protect him from evil spirits.

The soothsayer always warns him of the presence of spirits (kinkirsi) and prescribes the necessary sacrifices and alms.

241 782 Sacrifices. The new occupant calls for the head of the family or, if he is a Nionioga, for the Tengsoba, who is in charge of sacrifices. The following sacramental words are pronounced: "A zaguel tib reg' noag'la zom kom kon Naba zidwende, tib kon zig'tinguin damba, tib kon timpelem, tib kon yaramba, kon saramba, tib reg'kon zig, kinkirga ta wa me nan baou ki, on -- on tib reg'koin gnimassem, lass' pogh'banga, lasse zoug'banga, naore banga ..." Translation: "On the part of X, I offer this rooster and this water with flour to the sun god (Zidwendé), to the

241 brothers of the family heads who died childless (zig'tinguin damba),
782 and to the ancestors and grandparents. May they see to it that these offerings are accepted by the kinkirsi (spirits of the fields) and that the latter favor X with [242] good health and large crops of millet and beans."

[787] Once these sacrifices have been made -- if they are accepted, the rooster falls on its back -- the new owner has his land cleared and awaits the winter season.

Field work. As soon as the first rains have come, the owner goes once more to the field and has another rooster killed and offered to the kinkirga [singular of kinkirsi] with a plea for gnimassem (good health) and large harvests which he will consume with new wives and new children (pog'palla, la bipalla). Afterward he sows large and small millet, peanuts, beans, etc.

If the year has been a good one and the Moaga has had fine crops, he is happy and in good time will remember the spirit of the fields. For the moment he is busy transporting the millet to the temporary granary (lourgho).

Threshing millet. Before his millet is threshed, the Moaga must make a sacrifice to the zéiga (threshing floor). The ritual words differ from those described above only in the following words: "X asks that this millet, which he will eat, be good for him and that he eat it in peace and good health with his family." (Kita ri ki wan ne lafi layelsomdé né a zak'ramba.)

241 [243] He then appeals to the young men of the village for help
476 in threshing his grain. For the occasion he has a great deal of beer
[252] prepared and quantities of beans (benga) cooked. The beans are prepared with sesame (sinni). After the job is done, two children between the ages of six and seven are called, and their hands filled with the bean mixture. They must run around the threshing floor while eating some of the beans. The rest will be scattered to the winds. They must stop three times for breath and look at each other. Then the remaining beans are distributed among the workers. They are also given beer.

423 Do owners retain rights over abandoned land? In order to occupy abandoned land; permission must first be obtained from the former owner, who retains his rights over the land. He may reclaim it at

264 meal of sagbo in the evening.

What we call breakfast is hardly known. Between the two main meals, however, the chiefs have meat grilled or roasted. They are very fond of it and have it seasoned with enough salt and pepper to make it possible to consume the endless number of [273] small gourds of beer which they drink from morning to night.

The Moaga has only one real meal a day, the evening meal. A large millet cake satisfies the day's hunger. If there is any left over, he keeps it carefully for his morning meal. If there is none left, a frequent state of affairs, he makes do with his zompanrga, crushed millet diluted with water and sometimes eaten with a bit of vegetable fat or a few peanuts.

He rarely eats any rice, and if he has no sagbo, he contents himself with benga and souma.

261 It is during the festivals that the Moaga eats his fill. At such
527 times the head of the compound kills a goat, a sheep, or some chickens and has sagbo and fabirama prepared, or beans with copious amounts of karite butter. This is the feast. The members of the family stuff themselves to the point where attacks of diarrhea are inevitable. The results of the attacks are all the more serious in that they are never cared for properly.

263 The only seasonings known to the Moaga are kalgo (soumbala),
439 red pepper, okra, and salt. No more than a few years ago, however, before the [251] development of trade in the colony, salt was brought from Timbuktu and Mopti by the Dioula and Yarcé and was so expensive that the Mossi people who lived in the countryside often went for six months without tasting salted food.

241 There is reason to believe that the time is not far off when the Moaga will devote his efforts much more intensively to cash crops, such as cotton, potatoes, peanuts, etc. In this domain, the province chiefs at Ouagadougou have made real progress.

Mogh'Nab' Kawinré (Threshing the Grain of the Mogho Naba)

241 Sacrifices. For this ceremony, the emperor summons the
643 Mankougoudougou Tengsoba (a descendant of the autochthonous
782 Nioniossé, masters of the land) to Ouagadougou and gives him a

241 sheep to be sacrificed to the threshing floor (zéiga).

643 The work. After this sacrifice, around two-thirty in the after-
782 noon, the Kam Naba (a notable in the section of the Baloum Naba) proceeds to the threshing floor with the young men from Bilbalogo and Dapoya who have been assembled for the occasion. The operation involves beating the millet stalks with tree branches cut to form an obtuse angle and called dabandé or soika.

643 When the job is done, the workers depart, [252] leaving the
241 grain to be gathered up another day.

The next morning they return to the field, preceded by the Bend' Naba (chief drummer), who plays the bouloumbougri kabse nanamsé to which the other drummers respond with bouroum-bouroum (the Bend Naba gives the names of the emperor's ministers, recalling the origins of each one, and wishes a happy new year to Oubri-yiri Naba, "master of the house of Oubri," that is, to the Mogho Naba; bouroum-bouroum has no special meaning).

Immediately thereafter, the Bend Naba invites the young men to the warba (funeral dance), which is actually only a confused stamping on the millet which in the process is scattered far and wide. Suddenly the drums stop, the signal for a rest. Then the Kam Naba from Bilbalogo divides the pile of millet into two parts by tracing a straight line across the center of the zéiga. The people from Bilbalogo (the section of the Baloum Naba) gather one half, and those from Dapoya (section of the house slaves) gather up the other half.

Whether it is a good or bad year, the emperor's harvest is expected to yield 100 baskets (péog' koabga) full of grain.

The Mogho Naba sends 50 to 70 canari of beer to the workers and shortly goes there himself. He also distributes two or three wassé (from waga, load of 1,000 kola nuts) to the ministers and to the workers.

After thanking and encouraging the workers, the [253] emperor returns to his house, escorted by his ministers and all the horsemen.

643 Mankougoudougou Tensoba then uses wet ashes to make three
241 lines on the ground in different parts of the zéiga. Then he takes
782 a lagha (small earthenware jar) and puts some water into it. He

643 pronounces a few sacramental words and lightly sprinkles the
241 millet, saying: "Zâbre saga Ybéogo sâga, samb'da kôbo la ka toin
782 sameb'la fi yé (the morning and evening rains may put a stop to the cultivation of the fields, but cannot injure the health of the King)." He next takes a straw broom (sagha) and pulls it apart in order to get a bit of millet to put into the lagha mentioned
[343] above. He goes then to the temporary granary (lourgho, granary made of Mossi secco) and walks around it three times. An emissary of the emperor gives him a white rooster (nora-pelga), some beer (dam), and zom-kom (water with flour in it). The priest sits down in the shade of the lourgho and before making the sacrifice pronounces the following words: "Naba Siguiri bad'kom, deghin kon Naba Wogbo, tib reg, kon Naba Sanum, tib kon Naba Koutou, tib reg' kon Naba Baongo, tib kon Naba Karfo, tib reg'kon Naba Sawadogo, tib reg la be kon Nab, gnimassem, la lafi," which means literally, "I offer this rooster, this water with flour, and this beer to Naba Siguiri (father of the reigning emperor) in order that he will persuade the Mogho Nabas Wobgo, Sanum, Koukou, Baongo, Karfo, and Sawadogo, to accept them, so that the emperor may enjoy good health and happiness."

The Tengsoba then hands the small quantity of millet [254] which he took earlier to the pugtiéma (first wife of the king) to be made into a millet cake and offered to the spirits (manes of deceased emperors and other spirits of the threshing floor).

643 Transporting the millet to the granaries. The wives, daughters,
251 and sisters of the Mogho Naba are alone given the duty of carrying the millet to the granaries (baoré) (1). We have already noted that

1. This baoré granary is made of earth mixed with quantities of straw.

there are supposed to be a hundred loads of grain, even though the harvest may not fill twenty baskets. The number of baskets required by custom is attained by putting a small quantity of millet in each basket.

643 The millet intentionally left on the zéiga. A little millet is
241 purposely left here and there on the zéiga, and the Kassiri Naba (village chief) takes it for his own use. This signal favor, however,

M
566 may leave his master whenever he pleases, either to devote himself
M to trade or to enter the service of another man; but often he gets all
F his work from his master.

563 The Peul shepherds never were slaves of the Mossi, because they
M only knew how to watch the herds and were incapable of working the
F land. They were, nevertheless, held in severe vassalage by the Mossi,
[784 especially by the nabas, and served as victims in certain sacrifices.
Some Mossi sold by the Yarsé or by other Mossi have occasionally been
their slaves, especially in the Dori region called Gyémaré by the
natives.

/15/ Chapter 2. Administration

M
157 The power of the chiefs and the submission of their subjects are characteristic traits of Mossi country. The spirit of submission permeates the whole Mossi mentality. The Mossi are not particularly secretive or incommunicative, as the Bambara are said to be. On the contrary, they talk quite freely to their friends, even of their personal affairs; this does not mean that they are unable to keep a secret, especially if it is the king's secret. Two individuals have to be equals if there is to be some freedom between them; this freedom may develop into a certain closeness, but never into friendship in the highest sense of the term. If the Mossi appears secretive, it is because he is afraid to offend someone more powerful than himself. He always yields before a chief, before someone who "has the strength," as he puts it, while inwardly he may retain his own opinion and act as he pleases. When a chief talks, he hears nothing but these words
M in reply: bé néré, naba — "That's it, that's right. I agree with you."
576 The Mossi salute, formerly used in all the Black empires of the Sudan, especially in the courts of Ghana, Mali, and Gao, provides good evidence of this mentality. When we first enter the country as foreigners, we are shocked to see a man thus lower himself before another man. In order to salute, the Mossi puts down his load, hat, and sword, removes his shoes, sits on the ground, folds his legs slightly, and leans the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest against the ground, as far apart as possible; the forearms, folded in front of

585 184 It should be noted that these ceremonies are often curtailed. They may also vary in ways that will not be described here. Sometimes they may not take place at all. This happens when the girl already has a husband prior to her birth, or when she is part of an inheritance. In such cases her relatives merely take her to her husband.

585 782 No sacrifices are performed during the marriage ceremonies. The husband does offer a sacrifice on the day he builds a hut for his wife, and at the place where the structure is to be erected. The girl's mother consults the sorcerer a few times to find out if her daughter will be welcomed in her new home, and to know which sacrifice must be offered to ward off illness while she lives with her husband. She communicates the answer to the girl's father, and he himself offers the prescribed sacrifice.

602 431 In theory, the husband owes nothing else to his in-laws. In practice, he would hold himself in poor esteem if he were not to present them with a few more gifts, especially on important feast days. When his maize is harvested, he sets aside a few ears for his wife's relatives; when his millet is threshed, he is sure to send some to his father-in-law; whenever he organizes any sort of festivity, his in-laws are invited; and he personally helps them in their work.

586 There is no divorce in the formal sense of a judgment rendered by law. A husband may send his wife back to her relatives if she steals, if she is lazy, or especially if she commits adultery, but even in the latter case his action will be regarded with disapproval. It is a husband's duty to watch over his wife and, if necessary, to discipline her. The man who repudiates his wife makes himself unpopular and cannot obtain new wives. It also happens, and this occurs more frequently, that the wife runs away and goes back to her family, /33/ either because she complains of ill treatment, or because she is not happy with her husband, or for some other reason of a more or less dubious character. If the husband manages to catch up with her before she gets home, no great problem is involved. He merely beats her and shuts her in for a few days. If she does reach her relatives, especially if they are in connivance, the husband must present a few gifts to them and even to his wife. The in-laws usually try to convince their daughter to return to her husband, but they do not force her to do so. Even the naba, when called upon to intervene, limits himself to the use of moral authority; his threats usually persuade the woman to return to her husband, who may himself use force if he wishes.

586 It nevertheless happens, though very rarely, that the husband is unable to convince his wife and returns home alone. No one troubles the wife from then on, and her relatives give her full freedom. The grudge of the rejected husband may be persistent, however, and his vengeance frightful. The bride price is not returned; the husband should have known how to keep his wife. It is nevertheless acknowledged that the children born of the union, boys or girls, belong to the father, and he does not fail to claim them when they are grown, or if they run away to their mother.

564 467 Negro populations often contain caste groups, set apart from each other by tight barriers. The most outstanding of these are the rules prohibiting marriage between members of the same caste or between those who belong to a caste and those who do not. Such prohibitions do not exist among the Mossi, except in the sense mentioned earlier. Although three caste-like groups exist among them, drummers, smiths, and undertakers, they are castes only in the sense that those who do not belong to such a family cannot exercise the profession. It might be more accurate to call them guilds.

533 [534] The drummers (binda) are those who play the bindré, a sort of large gourd with an aperture about 40 centimeters in diameter and covered with hide. Only those who belong to the drummers' family may play on this drum, which apparently is peculiar to the Mossi, but anyone may play on the other drums. The drummers are present [782] at all sacrifices offered by the naba; on Friday, the day of sacrifice, they go and pay their respects to him. When sacrifices are offered, they are entitled to the head of the victim. They are present at all [764] burials, where they play their drum and receive a remuneration which varies with the wealth of the deceased. If it is one of their members who died, they receive neither cowries nor food. They go to war [727] with their drums. If they are so unfortunate as to be made prisoners, they are never sold but ruthlessly killed; this is done either to prevent them from going back into the fray and stirring the warriors to sack the village, or because no one would want to buy them since they belong to a naba who would retaliate against their captors, or for both reasons at once. The drummers are the country's griot, a term hallowed by custom. They know the genealogy of every naba and sing his praises. Each province chief has a number of drummers and never travels without taking some of them with him. At other times they go to /34/ the market and follow the best-dressed people, singing

843 A woman's role is to bear children. When she knows that she is pregnant, she no longer consents to come to her husband, but she is careful not to inform him of her state; if she told him, the child would die. If her parents happen to pass away during her pregnancy, she does not go into mourning and does not attend the funeral. If she is newly wed and has not yet borne children, one of the other wives of her husband, or, if there are none, the husband's sister, comes at night to sprinkle the husband and wife with water. The young wife will henceforth call this woman her husband, prepare millet mush for her, and heat the water in which she washes. When the pregnancy begins to show, one of the wife's female relatives consults the sorcerer [782] to find out which sacrifice should be offered so that all will go well, but the husband is not informed of this consultation. Sometimes the sacrifice is repeated when the birth draws near. When the first baby 851 is born, the husband sends a child to his wife's relatives with a rooster or a hen depending on the newborn's sex. The child tosses the bird into the yard without saying a word and runs away; everybody understands.

847 /40/ A child born deformed, lame, or blind is done away with; 845 it is simply drowned without further ado if considered incurable. In 732 olden times, twins were often drowned also because their birth entails 761 difficulties for the family, who must offer special sacrifices; some- 753 times only one of them was done away with. If they are spared and die a natural death, the mother wears a small bell at her ankle until the anniversary of the death (kouré). If the mother happens to die or the father becomes ill, the sorcerer need only say so and the children are put to death, because they are said to have caused the illness or death of their parents. A baby who could barely walk was once brought by relatives to the Koupéla Fathers. He had been born on a Friday and his mother had died; that was sufficient to call for his sacrifice. His relatives tried unsuccessfully to poison him; they exposed him for three days in the bush, and the child did not die. As a last resort they brought him to the missionaries, who hastened to shelter him. Children recognized as insane are abandoned in the bush where they die of hunger.

732 It is only fair to add, however, that these barbarous practices 845 reminiscent of Sparta are not invariably followed. Several lame and incurably ill children are carefully tended by their parents, and some twins born prior to the French occupation are alive and in good health.

776 2. We owe this list of formulas to the kindness of Fr. Thueux, the European who undoubtedly knows the Mossi language most intimately. May we express here our hearty thanks.

sacrifice includes a curse against enemies.

776 Beyond these wishes, however, no prayer is addressed to God directly; no sacrifice is offered to Him without mention of spirits.
782 Yet, as we shall see in the following chapter, the invocations of the sacrificial formula are addressed mostly to God, and when the sacrifice is over all those who have participated in it greet the sacrificer with these words: "May God accept your sacrifice; may God receive it!"

776 But who is this God? Is he one or many? Has he a body, or is he spirit? Where does he dwell? So many questions which a Mossi has never asked himself and which leave him momentarily bewildered. "Is God one or many?" "I don't know" is the usual answer. If one insists, he says that God is one. But a difficulty arises: "Why then, in sacrifices, do you invoke God-king male and God-king female?" Again: "I don't know; this is what our fathers said."

776 Does God have a body? Yes, assuredly, for only a highly practiced
821 intelligence can conceive of a pure spirit. But what is this body like? "I don't know." Where is God? "Everywhere." But does he occupy a special place? "God is the sun."

776 Do they identify God with the sun? It is difficult for us to establish
782 a settled opinion on the subject. They do seem to grant the identifi-
821 cation, and in the course of sacrifices—after all, their sacrificial formulas must fit their concept of divinity—they offer God water for his rising and pour it to the east, water for his retiring and pour it to the west. In a quarrel the weaker party says: "God is my witness that I have not harmed you; God will pay you back in kind," and points toward the sun. Sacrifices are never /80/ offered in the middle of the night; but then they are not made in the middle of the day either, and they may be offered in the evening, when the sun has dipped below the horizon. The names for God and for the sun are
776 different. Wendé is the proper name for God, Wennam indicates
821 God's power (Wende nam). These words have no plural and thus indicate a belief in God's oneness. The sun is called Winniga, or

776 makes noise in the bush under certain leafy trees, his cheeks will swell
753 out. The tisé talk, even during the day. It is their voices which are heard when the wind stirs the leaves. We had /81/ papaw seeds planted all around our dwelling. They had sprouted and grown well; the fruit was already ripening. One morning, no papaw trees were left in
[824] Koupéla! The naba had decreed that these were talking trees, that they would cause illness to those who had them in their soukala ... and the papaws had been cut down!

776 Fortunately, it is possible to protect oneself against the tisé. First,
782 those trees which shelter them may be felled, and the spirits will move elsewhere. Some very beautiful trees vanish thus from the villages. The tisé may also be appeased with sacrifices. Does this result in tree cult, dendrolatry? Indeed not! The Mossi clearly make the distinction between the tree and the spirit that inhabits it, and they sacrifice to the spirit. Sometimes also, a tree was planted on the
[769] grave of the elder who founded the village, and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirit at the foot of the tree. Finally, there are fetishes more powerful than the tisé. It is enough to know which roots and barks the tisé do not like, to steep them in water, and to place the pot at the door of the hut. When a tiga sees this fetish, he invariably runs away. Some Peul are said to have the power to distinguish between those trees where spirits dwell and those where they do not, and to kill the former trees merely by rubbing them with butter! This must be done in a special way.

776 The kikirsi are imps, red or black all over, and only a few centi-
754 meters high. Their body has the same shape as ours, but it is much nimbler and more tenuous—something ethereal and impalpable that only the sorcerers can discern. The latter call them with a low whistle or by shaking a peculiarly shaped gourd that looks like a handle
[534] ending in a sphere. This gourd is dried without being opened, and the seeds gather in the sphere. The sorcerer makes noise by shaking this instrument, and the kikirsi flock to him singing.

776 There are good and evil kikirsi, and the good ones only do evil when forced to do so; for instance, when someone puts pepper in their sauce. They abhor pepper but they love honey, and every good housewife who wishes to preserve her honey covers it carefully with pepper to prevent the kikirsi from eating it. They are inordinately fond of sesame, and they dote on millet cakes (samsa); every woman who makes millet cakes offers them a few. People who eat samsa while walking are careful to drop a few crumbs to the ground. On the

776 other hand, the kikirsi do not drink fermented millet beer, but they must be offered some before the yeast (da'nodo) is added. They have their preferences like human beings. They know hatred and jealousy, and sometimes they even kill one another. They are said to have two 776 sexes, to marry, and to procreate. They even have the special faculty 845 of always bearing twins, and this is why twins are called by their 551 name and are dedicated to them; it is believed that spirits dwell within them.

776 The birth of twins causes their mother much trouble. Formerly 845 both were sometimes put to death, while at other times only one was killed. When a woman bears twins, she builds at the door of her hut 782 a tiny miniature house where the spirits dwelling /82/ within her children will take shelter. Three times a year if her means allow it, in the spring, in the winter, and at the height of the rainy season, or at least once a year, a guinea hen must be offered to the kikirsi. This fowl is sacrificed exclusively to them. On that day they must also be offered their favorite foods, and this means that honey, sesame, and millet cakes must be purchased, that beer must be prepared and a jar saved without yeast, that millet mush has to be cooked, and especially that no pepper be added to the sauce. Otherwise the husband, [753] wife, or children will be afflicted with a dreadful eye disease, for such is the illness which the kikirsi have the power of visiting on human beings.

776 As children, twins may wear only the kankabra, a garment made 845 of black and whitish threads, the characteristic clothing of the kikirsi. Happily, they are later allowed to dress as they please. If the mother dies, the twins offer the sacrifices themselves and build the small hut that serves as a dwelling for their little spirit. The later born twin is considered the older of the two. They both wear the same bracelet and share everything given to them. It is not considered proper to make a gift to one without giving the same thing to the other. Actually, these customs are to be found in Africa from Bambara country to Tanganyika.

776 To return to the kikirsi themselves, they are present everywhere. In the bush they are fond of termite nests, large and small. They 241 also like open spaces. They are to be found around the villages; there are ponds set apart for the kikirsi, wells considered to belong to them. There are spirits watching over every field, and before sowing, as also before harvesting millet, the master of the field sacrifices a chicken to the spirit on a stone in the middle of the field. The

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.

776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the
[577] goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people
[513] who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness.
[774] When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

776 The naba does so more than anyone else; on the Day of the Dead
782 (basra) he always makes sacrifices there, and usually the village elders accompany him.

776 A village may have several tangandé /sic/, but the protective
778 animal or animals—most often there are two—are the same in all the sacred groves, of which there are as many as there are tangandé /sic/. Nothing may be taken from a sacred grove; everything in it is sacred. No wood may be cut down, and it is forbidden even to gather dead wood which has fallen by itself. By the same token, the dry grass may not be set afire, not even in the area around the grove. If all precautions have been duly taken and fire nevertheless spreads to the sacred grove, nothing can be done and the village people are not held responsible. On the other hand, outsiders are prevented, by force if necessary, from taking anything whatever from the sacred grove. If the outsider is powerful and cannot be restrained, expiatory sacrifices are offered after his departure.

776 The tangandé is thus a guardian animal, and yet some tangamma
754 retaliate by afflicting the guilty party with diseases. If one of the sorcerers who eat souls (seuya) offers gifts to a tangandé, the latter will help him and refuse to restore the soul which has been entrusted to it, unless more substantial gifts are forthcoming. One may pray to a tangandé and make a vow, for example, promise it a goat or sheep if it kills a designated enemy. The goat is purchased pending the enemy's death. Sometimes the tangandé takes its time and
[781] several years go by. The spirit is chided and told to hurry, and finally decides to do away with the person in question. Then the goat is sacrificed.

776 Some people say that all tangamma come from the Fada N'Gourma
778 region, where the father of all tangamma is to be found. It is the
787 sorcerer's task to point out the tangamma and the place of their residence. Once, for example, a village had just been founded. The elders had found a piece of ground propitious to agriculture, in the vicinity of water, and had built their huts. At the beginning /84/ of the winter season, when the time came for sowing, they shared out the neighboring bush and proceeded to lay out their fields. One day a leopard driven out of its lair took to flight before their eyes and repaired to a thicket. Immediately the people were called, the thicket surrounded and searched thoroughly. No leopard was found. On the following day the same episode took place in the same spot. This happened three times, and every time it proved impossible to

obligations, and practices through which man acknowledges the supernatural world, fulfills his duties toward it and requests its assistance," there remains for us to investigate, now that beliefs have been studied, how the Mossi communicate with this supernatural world, how they discharge their obligations toward it, and how they request its assistance. This involves the whole matter of sacrifices and ceremonies.

Beyond this acknowledged and reasonable cult, however, there is another, magic, which is "the art of coercing into one's service the forces of nature, or harnessing the powers of the invisible world, through certain occult practices of a more ore less religious character." (2) This involves the whole area of superstitions, amulets, fetishes,

2. Ibid., p. 331.

and charms, and, more especially, the sorcerers and their practices.

782 Sacrifice is the central act of the cult in every religion, and it is usually bloody. Whatever their origin, the Mossi are no exception to this rule which applies to all mankind. They make bloody sacrifices and commune in the sacrifice to such a point that even those who did not witness the killing may eat of the animal and are said to have offered the sacrifice along with the sacrificer.

/90/ The blood of chickens, goats, sheep, and beeves is shed at the slightest pretext; sometimes it is the blood of donkeys, horses, and formerly even men. A Mossi will not undertake anything without sacrificing to his tangandé (guardian animal) or to his kikirsi (spirits). If he does not know to whom to address his sacrifice, he consults a sorcerer.

If a member of the family is ill, one or several sacrifices are offered; if someone leaves on a journey, if he goes hunting or fishing, he offers sacrifices. Sacrifices are also made when two men have quarreled and wish to make up their differences, and innumerable sacrifices are required as a result of dreams, evil forebodings, and dangers which seem to threaten. Sacrifices are made to gain the favors of kikirsi or ancestral spirits, to beg for success in an undertaking, to fulfill a row, to ward off a disease, to harm an enemy, to appease an irked ancestor or some incensed tisé, kikirsi, or tangamma. Hardly any medicines are prepared without a sacrifice, and sacrifices are part of all spells, of all procedures meant to harm an enemy. Sacrifices are offered before sowing, before harvesting, before building

782 a hut for one's wife. Sacrifices are made for every purpose, for everybody, and practically to everything.

Sacrifices are made everywhere. The sacred grove is the place most frequently chosen, along with the dwelling-stone of the kikiriga who protects the house. Sacrifices may be made, however, in the fields, in open spaces where nothing grows, or on the path which leads to the tangandé either from the village where one lives or from one's village of origin, if it is learned that the spirit requires a sacrifice and one cannot go there in person.

Any man may offer a sacrifice once he has reached the age of reason, and children of about ten are sometimes seen offering their sacrifices with as much solemnity as their elders. Women cannot [562] themselves make sacrifices; they must resort to the agency of men. They may, however, furnish the victim and partake of it when it is eaten. Nabas and men of some wealth have their own appointed sacrificer or sacrificers. This is compulsory for province chiefs, who themselves never sacrifice in public ceremonies and quite rarely in private.

There are several kinds of sacrifices, and we shall study each one of them in turn, the better to understand how the Mossi communicate with the invisible world.

First, the characteristic sacrifice which serves as basis to all the others, the mand'zallé.

The sacrificer, accompanied by his son bearing a white or otherwise colored rooster and a gourd containing millet flour mixed with water, proceeds to the place of the sacrifice, for example, to the tangandé.

Upon arriving he says:

782 Kabré, kabré. Excuse me, pardon me.

539 /91/ Then he sits down, his face turned to the west, and taking the victim in his hands, he says:

Na-Wend'daogo, sak'a tan!	God-king male, answer thrice!
Na-Wend'poko, sak'a nasé!	God-king female, answer four times!
Na-Wend'ka kou ned'yé, kon ky yé.	If God-king does not kill, we do not die.
Na-Wendé ka léo, ned'kon lu'yé. — Pilimpik'dim n'yélé; lila kom'dim n'yélé t'eb y noara, ti	If God-king does not bind, we are not bound. — The butterflies have told us; the spirits of the water have told us to take a

● 782 539 no'pelra t'eb kis'tangandé t'a déé n'di né teng'kikirsi lé teng'portapa.

bird, a white rooster, and to offer it to the tangandé, so that he may take it and it with the kikirsi of the village and their wives.

782 539 755 This formula may vary with the circumstances. This is when the sacrificer sets forth his wishes. He tells the tangandé, for instance, that his son is ill and that he has consulted the sorcerer, who has told him to take a white rooster and offer it to the tangandé with water, so that the tangandé may restore his son's health. Then he pours the water behind his back, toward the east, and says:

Na-wendé, déé a ybou kom! God-king, receive the water of your rising!

Then he pours water before him, to the west, and says:

Na-wendé, déé a kyenbo kom! God-king, receive the water of your setting!

Finally he pours water on the sacrificial stone or before his feet, saying:

Tangandé, yk'n'déé kom nyou la kwen la biga lafi! Tangandé, arise, receive the water and drink it, and grant health to my son!

Nyé lé zouanga, nini ka yé. He is like a blind man, he no longer has eyes.

Tangandé nyé youngo né wintoro la ko biga lafi. The tangandé, he sees night and day and grants health to my child.

If the sacrifice includes an offering of millet beer, he pours some on the sacrificial stone, saying:

Na-Wendé ka nyou dam yé, la porédimma nyouda. God-king does not drink beer, but those of his retinue do.

Then he seizes the rooster with his left hand, bends its head back by pulling the comb, and slits its throat. He allows the blood to flow upon the stone where the water was poured, while saying:

Tangandé déé noara n'di, la kwen la biga lafi né sounoro! Tangandé, receive this rooster and eat it, and grant my child health and joy!

Then he tosses the rooster before him, saying:

Noara bé Wennam, ba souk' ba'a. This rooster is for God; may He dispell the illness.

Then he sends his child to get the rooster. The boy grasps the bird when it is lying on its back and if necessary helps it to achieve this

782 539 755 position. /92/ He drags it along the ground by the feet to the sacrificer, who says:

T'a vouda bemdaoge. — Drag me enemies along the ground.

The sacrificer then seizes the chicken and sets it upon its feet, holding its head straight:

T'a timma biga! — May He grant health to my child!

He turns the rooster around, with its head down and its legs up in the air:

T'a terlda bema! — May He cause my enemies to bite the dust!

With his left hand he tears feathers from the neck, spits on them, and glues them to the stone or to the ground with the victims's blood, saying:

Yelbandé tou sébro! — May all that is evil go with the wind!

Ta toubré oum! — May his /my enemy's/ ears catch (my curses)!

Ta nif ka nya yé! — May he /my enemy's/ eyes go blind!

He breaks one of the chicken's legs:

T'a kao bemdaogo karga! — Break the leg of my male enemies!

He breaks the other leg:

T'a kao bempoko karga! — Break the leg of my female enemies!

He returns the bird to the child, who carries it away. The remaining water and beer are poured on the very spot of the sacrifice.

The rooster is plucked there or at home and roasted or cooked in water according to the sacrifice. The sacrificer removes the claws, beak, pinions, and liver, and he places them in the left hand of his child who lays them by the path some distance away, saying:

Mand'déé gobra, la kwen détogo nyé masem. — The sacrifice is received with the left hand, but grant him health with the right hand.

He returns to the place where the people are gathered, and the victim is shared among all present. When all have eaten, they gather in a group before the sacrificer and greet him as follows:

Wennam déé mando! — May God receive /Tr., the Mossi word means "eat"/ your sacrifice!

Wennam tou taoré! — May God accept it!

The sacrifice is over.

782 If a goat, sheep, or beef was sacrificed, the hair on top of the
755 head is pulled out instead of neck feathers, and a piece of the rope used to tie the victim is added. All of this is glued where the blood was shed, and the victim's legs are not broken.

Such is the usual sacrificial formula. Variations are of course introduced by individuals and by the customs of particular regions. This is the mand'zallé.

/93/ The mand'lingdem or mand'dédem, which we might call "hidden sacrifice," is offered for the sake of someone who is ill and on the point of death. His illness is due to the fact that the soul has left his body. The sorcerer has said that it is to be found in the tangandé. Without the sick persons knowledge, hence the name "hidden sacrifice," his father goes to the tangandé, accompanied by another of his children who bears the victim and some water and by the sick person's mother who bears a large gourd half filled with water and a smaller gourd inside it.

The sacrifice is offered as previously described, but while the child is roasting the chicken, the sacrificer tosses onto the ground three cowries in the case of a sick boy, four in the case of a girl, and pours a little water. Then he invokes the sick child by name:
[801] "Bila, come, answer me." He calls three times for a boy, four times for a girl. He then takes the cowries and some of the soil which was soaked with water and the animals blood. The woman lifts the small gourd which floats in the water, the sacrificer places the mud and cowries at the bottom of the large container, and the woman quickly covers the mixture with the small gourd which she holds down in the water. This procedure is repeated three or four times according to the patient's sex. The woman then heads toward home, holding the container in one hand and still bearing down on the small gourd to prevent it from floating. The sacrificer follows her, waving his sword or spear behind her to ward off the evil spirits. The soul is at the bottom of the water, amid the bloody mud and cowries, and they must do their utmost to prevent it from running away again.

When the procession reaches the patient, he is made to sit up, and the woman pours the water of the large gourd on his head, without lifting the smaller gourd. If the sick person, surprised by this sudden shower, gives a start, it means that he is saved; his soul has re-entered his body. Otherwise, nothing can be done, and the unfortunate person is abandoned to his fate; the tangandé did not want to return the soul.

782 755 Then the sacrificer and his assistants eat the victim, but the patient does not partake of it.

782 751 [753] The silent sacrifice, mand'moukou—also called "egg sacrifice," mand'gellé, because an egg is offered—is made in the following circumstances. Some diseases have the dismal faculty of talking like people. They call someone, who answers to his name thinking that a human being has called him. This is sufficient, he will fall ill and die.

The sorcerer decrees that such a disease threatens the village, and that a silent sacrifice is in order. The naba and the elders anxiously delegate one of the men among them to offer the sacrifice. On the following day in the morning, the appointed elder takes an egg, often also a kola nut and special roots, and follows the path which the disease would take if it came to the village. He walks in complete silence. When he reaches a certain point, he brings the egg close to his lips and tells it secretly that a disease threatens the village, and that if the disease tries to follow this path, the egg must stop it. Then he places the egg, kola nut, and roots upon the ground or buries them and retraces his steps. /94/ The egg, a chicken-to-be that cannot yet talk, is chosen as a symbol of the silence that must be observed to ward off the disease.

In the procedure called "bad sacrifice," the victim is not eaten by those present but left on the spot, where it rots or is eaten by vultures and hyenas. Any animal may be offered in this fashion, but the sorcerer alone may decide when the sacrifice is called for. It is usually performed to avert a general misfortune, for example, to ward off a contagious disease that will devour the animal and leave the people alone. The victim is sometimes abandoned alive and driven into the bush.

782 Anything may be offered in sacrifice if the sorcerer says so: kola nuts, cowries, the ashes of certain barks or roots, red stones, the inner fruit of the karite tree, etc. Chickens are the victims most commonly chosen, but sacrifices of goats and sheep are not uncommon. We have already mentioned the guinea hen as the sacrifice preferred by the kikirsi. The nabas are sometimes required to sacrifice cows or donkeys in certain cases. Some nabas, but not all, may sacrifice horses. Finally, even men were sacrificed in the old days. Certain tangamma [563] were greedy for human sacrifices, and the Peul were often used for this purpose. Natives with light skins tending to red, thus closer to [826] the color of ancestral spirits which are said to be white, were sacrificed to these spirits in preference to any others.

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782 to these spirits in preference to any others. These sacrifices were rare, and they were the sole prerogative of the highest chiefs.

Sometimes a vow is made instead of an immediate sacrifice. This is the poulongo mando. For example, a disease rages in the country, or someone has a serious undertaking at hand and wonders how it will turn out, or he wishes to dispose of an enemy. The person who makes the vow goes to the tangandé or to the kikirsi stone, carrying a gourd of water. He pours the water, saying, "Tangandé, if this illness departs, or if my understanding succeeds, or if my enemy dies, I will sacrifice to you a goat or a beef." To prove his good intentions, he buys the promised goat or cow at the first opportunity. If the tangandé or kikirsi grants his request, he fulfills his vow; in the sacrificial formula, instead of saying that the sorcerer told him to offer a certain victim, he mentions his vow and often promises another sacrifice on the following year.

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782 The Moslems have invented another bloodless sacrifice for their
755 own benefit. Here is the recipe: "If someone is ill in your soukala, take a kola nut, honey, honey cakes, beans, maize, and cowries and mix them all in a gourd filled with water. Then call in a Yarga or Peul Moslem to say a prayer. Of course, this man will only make the trip /95/ for a fee. A sheep at least must accompany the request." Grave, stately, and guarded as all good Moslems are supposed to be, the man sits down in the inner courtyard near the hut where the sick person lies, and the people sit around him, both hands open before their eyes, like a book, with their little fingers joined. The Moslem begins his prayer in Mossi, repeating the request that was made to him, that the patient should get well. When he is finished, he moves both hands across his face, three times for a boy, four times for a girl. Then the people go back to their former position, and the man utters some gibberish in Arabic or Peul. When he is through, all the people move their hands repeatedly across their faces; the head of the household dips his hand in the gourd which contains the mixture described above and puts it to his forehead; the children carry everything away; and everyone greets the sanctimonious rascal with the words: "May God grant your prayer!" Then the man sets out for home with the same gravity as before. The water will be used to wash the patient, and some of it will also be added to his food. None of this is very alarming, and if some patients get well through auto-suggestion, all the better.

789 Blessings and curses are also used. Should they be classed with the cult, or with magic? One way or the other, there are natives who have the power to kill anyone merely by saying a word. They can make the harvest wither, the cattle sicken. There are also some who can bless, make a trip propitious, an undertaking successful. If you
752 are wounded, go to them. They will put around the wounded part of
755 your body a greasy rope with three or four knots according to your sex;
801 there will be no swelling, and the wound will heal quickly.

782 Such are the major sacrifices and the practices of the cult. The
769 sacrifices offered to the spirits of the dead on the day of burial or on
796 the day of kouré have not been mentioned, because the animals offered are not properly speaking sacrificed (kou mando) but offered, presented, fabré. We shall now mention the sacrifices made on the Day of the Dead.

The Koupéla Mossi have two major feast days: the Day of the Dead or basra, and the Moslem sheep celebration called kibsa. Both are intimate family affairs.

Basra is the feast of the dead. On that day every family head must offer sacrifices to his ancestral spirits, and he alone may sacrifice upon the grave. Even if a member of the family has become powerful and wealthy, he will not offer the sacrifice which devolves by right to the family head. All members of the family who wish to offer a sacrifice on the ancestral grave must, therefore, go to their elder on that day. Anyone may sacrifice to the kikirsi and tangandé, and almost everyone does at this time. It is mainly on this occasion that little children may be seen gravely sacrificing their chicken to their kikirsi and to the tangandé; each makes it a point of honor to offer his own animal. Only chickens are sacrificed on that day.

Basra is not celebrated by every family on the same day. Some celebrate it before the province chief does, others after him, while most families do it on the same day he does.

/96/ The naba of Koupéla proceeds as described below, and the ceremonies are the same for his subjects with the sole difference that being less wealthy they cannot offer as many sacrifices. The basra is always celebrated by the naba on a Saturday. Already on Thursday he has taken non-fermented beer from the vats and poured it on the graves of his father and grandfather. He has also sacrificed a chicken on each of the tombs. Wherever an ancestor of the naba is buried, the guardian of the grave sacrifices a chicken. This is repeated on

782 Friday evening. The sacrifice is the usual one described earlier, but
769 the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "Soul of my
796 father, stretch out your hand and take this chicken which I offer you; grant me to reach next year in good health, and I will return with another chicken." The chicken killed on the grave is not roasted as in other sacrifices, but cooked in water.

On those days one must be careful not to sleep outside. The souls come to drink beer from the vats, and woe to those who lie in their way. They will kill them or at least make them seriously ill.

782 On the feast day itself, all those who have some obligation toward
769 the naba or toward the man who is holding the festivities, such as
796 those to whom he has given a wife or who have asked him for one,
431 come to greet him with a rooster and cowries if they did not come on the previous day. Many of his subjects, especially the canton chiefs, also come to offer their rooster and cowries. On the other hand, if an important visitor comes on that day, it is an elementary rule of civility to offer him a rooster.

782 Usually, on the very day of the festivities, no sacrifices are offered
769 on the graves. The victims are offered to the protective kikirsi of
796 the hut, of the inner courtyard, of the outer courtyard, of the whole soukala. The number of sacrificed chickens varies in proportion to the number of gifts. When the sacrifices are over, the naba assembles his people, and the beer is brought in and presented to him. He first pours a little on the ground as an offering to the ancestral spirits, then he drinks and distributes the ars among his people. This is not
[273] a good day to discuss important matters, because after noon everybody is more or less drunk.

On the following Monday and Wednesday, the naba proceeds at dawn with great pomp to two neighboring villages (Nakalbo and Sabré) to sacrifice a beef to the tangandé. Much feasting ensues there on those two days; the naba loses a beef /in each village/ but gains many chickens and a few thousand cowries. He also goes to the village of Toulgou on the day when basra is celebrated in that locality, because his family originated there.

527 The kibsa is the Moslem sheep feast, and it is celebrated forty days after the end of the great feast. All Mossi celebrate it in private; every family has brewed millet beer, and on that day millet mush is replaced with rice and meat. These festivities are even more intimate than the previous ones in the sense that they are held

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observed everywhere. In Bélousa, it is called kytouara. The name kibsa, on the other hand, is known everywhere, but special circumstances may prevent its celebration. Thus the warriors of one canton were defeated on that day, consider the kibsa unpropitious, and no longer celebrate it.

mention briefly.

The naky (naba ky, "naba's millet") is the naba's personal feast. It is always celebrated on a Saturday, like all the naba's ceremonies. It is proclaimed at market by the village-crier twenty-one days beforehand. Seven days before the feast, the naba sacrifices a goat on [782] the threshing floor and eats it on the spot after it has been roasted. The three nabas assigned as keepers of the naba's millet thresh a little grain, and every day they return to the grounds to thresh a little more until the day of the festivities. The quantity of millet thus flailed does not fill more than two baskets.

On the day of the feast, early in the morning, the high ministers go with their retinues to greet the naba: "May God be with you; may God grant you to see the year through!" A procession is formed and proceeds to the naba's threshing floor. His sisters and wives take part of the millet threshed on the previous days and carry it /98/, shrieking and dancing, to a granary located outside the naba's soukala. Then everyone drinks copiously.

Two days later, in the evening, another ceremony takes place. The naba's relatives go to the threshing floor and wrap the remaining millet in grass stalks; the bundle is carried to the sound of drums with jesting, shrieks, and dancing, as on the day of a burial. The millet is placed in the granary alongside the grain brought in on the day of the feast, and a sheep and a chicken are sacrificed nearby and [782] shared among those present. The naba does not partake of this flesh. Actually he hides throughout the ceremony, for if he saw the pro- [784] cession he would die.

What is the origin of this custom, which reminds the naba that in spite of all his power he is mortal like his subjects? What is the origin of that other custom, mentioned earlier, of building near his dwelling the hut where he will be buried? The Romans used to remind their

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769 destroy the yield. And, depending on his attentions to them, they can give or take away the good health necessary to carry him through the arduous activity of the rainy season when work is hardest, the granaries nearly empty, and food in short supply. Separate ancestral spirits look out for different aspects of the well-being of the individual. Satisfying their various sacrificial requirements is both expensive and time-consuming, but their good will is essential to the success of the farmer, and it is in his own best interest to be attentive to their needs.

THE EARTH CUSTODIANS

793 A close relationship exists between the control of the water supply upon which the agricultural economy depends and the authority of the 776 earth custodians in their role as intermediaries with the several manifestations of Wennam, the Mossi deity. The deity itself is somewhat aloof from the affairs of men, but through his specific manifestations and with the intercession of the earth custodians (*Tenga Soba namba*), descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the Yatenga, the individual propitiates Wennam in order to control the various forces of the natural and supernatural environment upon which the success of his economic or social endeavor is dependent. Tenga Wende, his terrestrial manifestation, and Tido Wende, which gives life to the vegetable kingdom, are the aspects of Wennam which are most frequently evoked; but Siguiri Wende, the deified first ancestor of the Mossi; Ki Wende, the millet god; and Saga Wende, the rain deity, are also frequently called upon for help.

793 Each Mossi village in the Yatenga is divided into one or more areas, each of which is in the "command" of one of the village earth custodians. [36] Each of these areas contains both the dwelling of the Savadogo lineage of the earth custodian and the residence and farmlands of various "true" Mossi lineages. The head of each lineage maintains the good will of the terrestrial manifestation of the deity through the intercession of the earth custodian who "commands" his land. In some instances a lineage may own land under the authority of two different earth custodians; in this case offerings must be made at the shrine (*tenga*) of each.

793 The good fortune which may be secured through obeisance to the ● 782 terrestrial manifestation of the deity (Tenga Wende) involves both sacrifices and gifts of money to the earth custodian and abstention from acts offensive to the earth. For example, sexual intercourse may take [833 place only in a private courtyard or within the house. Violation of this 783] rule defiles the land and must be expiated through a special sacrifice and the payment of a fine to the earth custodian. Any lost object found in the 778 public way or in the bush is in the custody of the earth deity and must be turned over to the earth custodian to await the inquiry of the proper owners. If such objects are unclaimed, they are given to Tenga Wende

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by being placed on his altar, where they become part of the earth symbols (*tiinse*). As a result, these altars are piled high with old sardine cans, bicycle parts, remnants of clothing, unusual stones and scraps of metal, baskets, wooden implements, and weapons, which are left there to decompose slowly and return to the earth. Travelers in a strange village need never fear that their property will be stolen if they deposit it near the altar of the earth custodian.

When a farmer wishes to clear a part of the bush which has previously been unused, he must first ask permission of the earth custodian and make a present to the earth deity. If he wishes to use the land again the following year, the request and the gift must be repeated. Such a field may be passed on to his descendants, who have a right to the land so long as they acknowledge each year the authority of the earth custodian. If a new well is to be dug, his authorization must be requested, and his advice may also be asked for the proper place to seek water. The wise Mossi farmer consults the earth custodian frequently about his agricultural activities. He also reports anything that he may have done to alter the condition of his farmlands or the surrounding bush, not because each individual act is of such great importance, but because maintaining good relations with the custodian of the earth is in the interest of his own economic security.

OTHER ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Other descendants of the original inhabitants of the Yatenga, the Bogoba, are especially charged with the propitiation of Tido Wendé, the vegetal manifestation of Wennam. In addition to the many manifestations of Wennam and the complex organization of priests and ceremonial designed for his propitiation, many other forces inhabit the unseen world of the Mossi. Indeed, to the observer their number and variety might at first seem to be almost as great as the number of Mossi with whom he may discuss these beings. Each man's description of these supernatural beings varies in terms of his subjective reaction resulting either from direct experience of them or from stories he has heard concerning their behavior. In contrast to Wennam, whose disposition is essentially benevolent so long as he is properly p' pitiated, these lesser supernatural beings are more frequently malicious and always more difficult to control. Perhaps for these reasons they are not worshiped. The Mossi's concern is not to propitiate them but to neutralize their evil intentions by the use of protective charms (*tim*).

The "bush," the unused land lying beyond the farms, is the least-known aspect of the Mossi natural environment. This is especially true of those far areas of the bush where even the authority of the earth custodians does not extend and where unknown spirits dwell. For although the

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Tenga Wende of the desire for a good growing year and gives each girl a small part of the wet earth near the shrine; this represents the now sanctified soul (*shiga*) and is placed under the granary from which the millet seeds for the new crop will be taken.

Then those who possess land controlled by the earth custodian organize a hunt for his benefit. The following day, the earth custodian visits each lineage which possesses fields in areas of the bush under his custodianship. He is given calabashes filled with millet gruel, which he pours as a libation on the earth, asking Tenga Wende to grant good health, heavy rains, and a successful harvest to the household. As the libation is poured, the women try to catch a little in their own calabashes of gruel, which they then pour as their sacrifice. Because the millet from the granaries of good harvests is lucky, other women want to try to catch a little of it in their own offerings; thus the libations spill from one calabash into another as they fall on the earth.

The second moon is called "Bega" after the ceremonial which coincides with the first labor in the fields, the clearing and burning which precedes planting. After making a sacrifice at his own altar, the earth custodian goes to the residence of the neighboring priest (*Boga*) specifically charged with the propitiation of the vegetal manifestation of the deity. This visit symbolizes the interdependent relationship of the two priests and the supernatural powers which they control. The *Boga* then repeats the libations made during the previous ritual, but this time the offerings of millet gruel are made to Tido Wende, the force which gives life to the plants, rather than to the earth.

A sacrifice to Pogo Wende, the specific manifestation of Tenga Wende which guards a farmer's fields, is usually made after they have been cleared and prepared for planting. Either before or after the sowing of the first seeds, the farmer asks the earth custodian to sacrifice a sheep or a goat to the field deity, requesting good health, heavy rains, and a rich harvest. This sacrifice (*Pogo Mande*) is the final aspect of the ceremonial preparations for the new economic cycle. It is designed to enlist the benevolence not only of Pogo Wende but also of the twin spirits which inhabit the field. If the twins are well disposed toward the farmer, they will protect the soul (*ki shiga*) of his millet stand from the twin spirits from neighboring fields who might try to steal it. Like the ancestral spirits, the twin spirits send a high wind into a field, blowing the ripening grains from the stalk and liberating their "souls" (*shiise*), which are then captured to enrich the spirits' own fields.

The third moon of the year is called "Cundiba Bega." The fourth, which usually corresponds with the European month of June, is called "unaccompanied" (Quizale), referring to the fact that no ceremonial is observed during its phase. The hard work in the fields is begun at this

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The next moon, called "Tido," is the occasion for a ceremony thanking Wennam, through his terrestrial and vegetal manifestations, for his support during the growing season and for the rich harvests that have been received. Though it is directed by the custodians of the earth, it is their auxiliaries, the Bogaba, who officiate and who sacrifice at the altars to Tido Wende. After they have finished, others may offer a chicken as thanks for successful harvests or for the birth of a child.

At the appearance of the next moon the ceremony called "Filiga" is celebrated, thanking the ancestors of each lineage for their protection during the hard months of the rainy season. The initial sacrifices are made by the village chief both at the shrine to the spirits of the former chiefs and at the ancestral shrine of his lineage. Because their offerings are made to powerful spirits, it is wiser not to refer directly to them by name. They are called *Kikirigo Na Maore*, which means "twin dance." The twin spirits, like the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), give children. Thus, through indirection a "charged" word is avoided by calling the sacrifice after an analogous but less powerful force. The specific purpose of the first sacrifice is to ask the protection and the assistance of the spirits of the former chiefs during the dangerous period which is to follow. The ancestral spirits of the villagers are then propitiated, and individuals who fail to perform the sacrifices properly may be punished by their ancestors. It is also believed that the ancestors may try to call some of the members of the lineage to join them at this time.

The sacrifices are made by the children of the daughters of the lineage (*Yasenamba*), whose permissive relationship with their mother's kinsmen is paralleled by their relationship to the ancestral spirits of their lineage. The lineage head presents the first chicken for sacrifice. Its throat is slowly cut as it is offered to the "twin" (*kikirigo*), as the "first ancestor" of the lineage is called—again through indirection, for even if the name of the first ancestor were known, it would be presumptuous of his descendants to call him by name. A chicken is then sacrificed to the "old ancestors" of the great-grandfather's generation, to the ancestors of the grandfather's generation, and to those of the fathers' generation who are deceased. As each chicken's throat is cut, the ancestors are thanked for their protection throughout the rainy season and requested to continue to look out for the welfare of their descendants during the months of the dry season which follow. Other men of the lineage may then give chickens to be sacrificed.

The final aspect of the ritual closing of the economic year is the ceremony called "Na Poosum," or "chief's salutation." It is essentially a social occasion. The homage to the central political authority made at Kom Filiga is now complemented on the village level. The elders of each lineage go to the village chief with presents of millet and assurances of

563 From a political standpoint, they were subject to the high Mossi powers just like the Yarsé, but like the latter and aside from this, they had preserved all their personal and economic freedom.

231 Let us add a few words about the various races of livestock which are to be found in Mossi territory.

As far as cattle is concerned, there are three races in the Ouagadougou circle:

1. Humped cattle, which is found mostly in the northern and eastern parts of the circle. This beef is tall, with a short dewlap and large horns. It is well suited to porterage, and furnishes excellent butcher's meat. There are some 5,000 head of humped cattle in the circle, 2,000 males and 3,000 females.

2. Humpless or local cattle. This beef has small horns, is found chiefly in the western and southwestern regions, and is usually designated by the name of Kipirsi cattle. It is not suited to porterage and yields inferior meat, but it is much stronger than the humped beef and better adapted to the climate.

3. Ordinary cattle, the result of a cross between the two preceding species. This beef has the strength of the Kipirsi cattle and is considerably taller. It is, furthermore, capable of being fattened, and can thus furnish meat of very good quality. This type predominates among the Tenkodogo Mossi. It comprises about 20,000 head, 8,000 males and 12,000 females.

It is therefore the local cattle (71,000 head), which is most numerous. The humped beeves are worth from 40 to 100 francs, [435] /489/ and the humpless beeves from 30 to 40 francs. The natives [232] are familiar with castration but practice it at random on any subject that comes to hand.

231 Prior to the arrival of the French, the Mossi used their cattle for meat and for sacrifices, but the two uses really amounted to one ● 782 (the former) since the animals offered to a dead person are always 651 eaten by the living. Nowadays, the Mossi sell their cattle to pay their tax. They still eat meat, although apparently not as much as before. The need to pay a tax which has been understood imperfectly, raised too rapidly and levied too harshly over the past few years, has forced them to save their cattle in order to sell it on the southern kola markets.

000 We are now finished with Mossi industries, not because this work is complete or definitive of course, nor because I have listed and thoroughly studied all this people's trades. I have said enough, however, to draw a significant outline /537/ of these industries and to show that they are flourishing. We may now proceed to trading.

438 443 Among the Mossi, as everywhere else in West Africa, one must distinguish the internal trade of the territory from its external trade.

As among other Blacks, the internal trade formerly was, and still is, ensured by village markets which are held at the most important localities on set days, for example every three days, every five days, etc. Thus at Ouagadougou, before the arrival of the Whites, the market was held every three days. Now it is a daily affair.

443 782 At every village where a market was held, there was a "market chief" named by the village chief. The market chief performed a sacrifice for the market. On a large consecrated stone he killed a chicken, a goat, or a sheep which he provided himself. [776] The animal was offered to the sky divinity (Ounam) to preclude fights on the market place. When this was over, our chief gave a hand to Ounam in his pacifying role, with the aid of a club if necessary.

443 All internal and external products of the territory were retailed at those markets, largely by women whom the Blacks, as we know, are in the habit of sending to market with surplus goods to sell. We shall not dwell on the internal Mossi trade, which is the same as in all black countries, a small retail trade nourished and vitalized by the external trade. Let us, therefore, proceed to the latter.

439 The external Mossi trade is the usual trade of the Sudan, which we have already described and which operates from north to south and south to north. Livestock is led toward the south, kola nuts are brought toward the north, salt is brought back toward the south, etc. We should add to this the cotton strips which constitute one of the important Mossi products (they are made by the Yarsé and by the Mossi themselves, as we saw). Those cotton strips, like livestock, are taken south where cotton is poorly grown.

584 To arrange a marriage, one offers gifts to the girl's family on
596 festive days. The gift grows more sizable from year to year. Finally, at the time of marriage, one offers 25 or 30 francs as a bride price.

Girls are also exchanged among families. /545/ One family may pledge one of its daughters to another family for one of its young men, while the second family provides a girl for a boy of the first family.

Even if a man buys a wife at market and has children by her, it is not he but his family head who gives those children in marriage.

If a young man goes himself to a family head, asks for a wife, and obtains her without any payment, without any bride price, it is the girl's father who disposes of the first daughter born of the union. He is entitled to take her with him as soon as she is no longer at the breast, and he will later give her in marriage. The other children are given in marriage by their father's family head.

596 4. The head of the family performs religious sacrifices for the
782 whole family, and acts as its judge.

5. When a family head dies, the headship of the family goes
596 to his younger brother along with the family property, that is,
428 his soukala if it is a family one (built by the family or with the help of the family), the available family fields, the movable family property (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, family jewels, etc.). The movable private property of the deceased, on the other hand (livestock, slaves, cowries, clothing, private jewels, etc.) go to the oldest son along with the fields cultivated by the deceased and by his household, that is, the private property of the deceased. Finally, the soukala, if it was built by the deceased all by himself and without the aid of his family, goes to his oldest son as well since it is private property.

The brother who inherits gives some of the movable family property to the other brothers, but only if he feels like doing so.

Here, family property is by far the most important.

Such is the oldest variant of the Mossi family type that prevails at the present day. Actually, this variant still persists in quite a few Mossi localities.

592 Now, here is the second variant:
596 1. Every household lives separately, works separately (except for the clearing of the family fields), and sees to its own subsistence.

592 People who are thus settled on their own work for themselves and no
596 longer for /546/ their father, with whom they lived and for whom they worked prior to marriage. They nevertheless offer gifts to their father from time to time.

592 2. As far as the marriage of children belonging to those house-
596 holds is concerned, a distinction must be made among the following
584 possibilities. When they are the children of wives bought by the family head, it is the latter who gives them in marriage. When they are the children of wives obtained by the husband himself, it is the latter who gives them in marriage.

Or else a rough compromise is made (in Boussouma province, for example). The first son and first daughter of the union are given in marriage by the family head, while the other children are given in marriage by the household.

596 3. It is the head of the family, however, who alone is entitled
782 to offer religious sacrifices for the whole family, and who always acts as its judge.

596 4. When the head of the family dies, the headship is trans-
428 mitted to his younger brother along with the family property. The private property of the deceased goes to all his sons, but the oldest son is favored. This actually constitutes the difference between this family type and the preceding one as far as inheritance is concerned. While in the preceding type the oldest son alone inherited, in this type all sons inherit but the eldest is heavily favored.

Thus, if the soukala was the private property of the deceased, it goes to the eldest son. If he is able to cultivate them all, the latter also keeps all the fields cultivated by the deceased. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus to his brothers.

As for livestock, if there are ten head that belonged privately to the deceased, and if there are three sons and two daughters, the oldest son will get four, each other son will get two, and each daughter will get one.

[567] As for slaves, if the situation is the same, the oldest son will take five out of ten, the second son three, the third son two, and the daughters will get none.

Cowries and grain are apportioned in the same manner.

In addition to these shares given to the younger sons and to the daughters, it must be noted that private property has acquired greater

644 "The Moro Naba, assisted by his ministers and with the help of frequent libations of dolo, listens to the requests which are made /572/ to him and passes sentence on the trials which are referred to him.

"Around eleven o'clock he withdraws into his hut and rests until three o'clock, at which time he comes and seats himself on his throne again.

"The Moro Naba's every gesture is prescribed by a minute protocol and accompanied by flute and drum music and finger snappings by his entourage.

"Is he riding out for a short stroll around Ouagadougou? The whole court follows him, either on foot or on horseback. His griot make the air re-echo with their shouts, to the accompaniment of drums and flutes. A groom leads his horse by the rein, while two soroné hold his stirrups and a third one, on horseback by his side, shelters him with a huge umbrella. Other pages follow carrying his pillow, his sword, and canari of dolo from which the sovereign draws frequent and abundant libations along the way.

"At night the Moro Naba, in disguise and accompanied by a single soroné, wanders incognito through the various village quarters in order to find out what is going on without being recognized.

[782] "On certain set dates, he goes to localities named Sabaye and Saraboutenga, not far from Ouagadougou, where he sacrifices beeves, sheep, and chickens.

644 595 "The Moro Naba has very numerous wives. In addition to those he marries himself, there are those of his predecessor and all those that devolve to him in the course of his reign, among them, in certain cases, the adulterous wives of his subjects.

644 595 684 "The sovereign's wives do not all live with him. They are settled in villages ruled by eunuchs and near which no one could come, on pain of death, prior to our occupation. Every year the faithfulness of the Moro Naba's wives is checked by submitting them to the same test as the soroné. Adultery is punished by death for the wife as well as her partner. It even seems that adultery with one of the sovereign's wives is regarded /573/ as the least pardonable crime a man can commit. In fact, the nakomsé or sons of chiefs are liable to the death penalty only in this case.

769 along with millet flour mixed in water. A few chickens are also killed. No one works on that day, but people eat, drink, and rest. There is no drumming or dancing, however.

Other Mossi (at Yakki, for example) make offerings to the ancestors in the hut of their first wife rather than on the graves.

Another feast comes at sowing time and is called Tengana. Certain leaves are sought in the bush, cooked with beans and underground peas, and eaten. Much dolo is also preapred.

244 716 On the first day of sowing, one goes to the fields and offers a chicken, millet flour, and dolo to the field stones (tenkougouri) and to the earth (tenga or tempeloun), so the sowing will go well, so there will be a good harvest, and so everyone will be in good health.

There is also an earth feast or Tensé (plural of tenga), which is celebrated once a year during the rainy season. It is the Moro Naba who sets the exact date of the Tensé. Every soukala head [782] kills a beef, a sheep, or a chicken. The young men collect the blood of the sacrificed animals in gourds and pour some upon the ground (to the Earth) in order to secure a good crop. The remainder is mixed with the flour of large white millet and eaten. Much dolo is consumed. The earth feast is the special festivity of those people who are called Tenga (earth), Tembila, Tenfisi, etc., and of those who were born on the day of the Tensé.

On that day sacrifices are also offered to Naba Ouondé (the Chief God).

/588/ On years when the previous millet harvest was bad, the Tensé is not celebrated.

The Mossi have no special harvesting feast. Actually, it is the Tiougou or Bassara (celebrated when the millet has been harvested) that is the harvesting feast as well as the feast of the ancestors.

782 778 The Mossi do not offer sacrifices to isolated trees, but they do to sacred groves or woods.

At Ouagadougou, at the spot where the White Fathers now live, there once stood a small sacred wood made up of large trees and thorny bushes, where sacrifices were offered before the French tore it down.

Every year the Moro Naba offered a sheep and a chicken to this sacred grove through the head of the Sékou quarter. He also offered

782 dolo and millet flour. There was no set time for this. The flesh
778 of the sacrificed animals devolved to the sacrificer, the head of Sékou.

At present day sacred groves are still to be found in various Mossi villages. Thus, for example, there are three at Kabayoro, two of which belong to individuals and one to the village. The Earth chief /Tr.: Tengsoba/ of Kabayoro offers sacrifices to the village grove whenever the bara says so.

The Mossi also make sacrifices to the hills.

At Sabtinga, about 17 kilometers northwest of Ouagadougou, there is a rise in the ground called Tantiibo where the Moro Naba used to go once a year with the Baloum Naba, many chiefs and people at the time when the weather begins to grow cold. He ordered a beef, a chicken, millet flour, and a gourd of dolo to be taken along, and they were handed over to the head of the quarter where the hillock stood. This chief performed the sacrifice and begged the piece of ground to grant good health to the Moro Naba. Only
[839] the Moro Naba, the Balou, the sacred people (eunuchs), and the soroné were present at the sacrifice, Other people who had come to Sabtinga remained in the village, whence the Moro Naba set out on foot to the spot of the sacrifice.

At Kombé-Padanda, a small hillock located in a /589/ Ouagadougou quarter, the same sacrifice was offered in the same fashion and at the same time of year.

326 Let us add that when Mossi blacksmiths go and smelt iron ore
782 in the bush, they kill chickens and offer millet flour on the spot where they extract the ore. The sacrifice is offered to the spirits of the hill, as well as to the Earth and to Naba Ouondé.

778 Sacrifices are made to watercourses as well as to hills, either
782 at fishing time or whenever the bara indicate that a certain stream requires a certain sacrifice.

825 As far as crocodiles are concerned, some of them are held
262 sacred by the Mossi. As for snakes, they are killed and usually eaten, but not everyone eats them. Some people abstain.

778 As for the Earth, the Moro Naba had sheep, chickens, millet
782 flour, and dolo handed over to the Baloum Naba through eunuchs several times a year, whenever a bara told him to do so. The Baloum Naba handed these gifts in person to the chief of Ouagadougou,

778 whose ancestors had ruled the soil of the territory. In the name of
782 the Moro Naba, he entrusted him with the task of offering all those gifts to the Earth so that the latter might favor the sovereign. Ouagadougou Naba performed the sacrifice before the door of his soukala.

[721] When the Moro Naba went to war, he also ordered the chief of Ougadougou to perform a sacrifice to the Earth. The bara indicated what should be sacrificed in order to insure victory, to "break" the villages that were to be attacked.

782 When rain failed to come, the Moro Naba would go to the hillock at Koumbé /sic/-Padanda, and have the head of the quarter offer a sacrifice (beef, sheep, chicken) to secure rain. If rain refused to come, the bara were consulted once more, and sacrifices were offered until it came.

776 The Mossi also have a sky god whom they call Ounam as well
782 as Naba Ouendé or Naba Ouondé, meaning "Sun Chief." This is a
794 trace of the sun cult, which is unusual in Black West Africa, all opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. /590/ The majority of the Mossi sacrifice much more to ancestors and to the Earth than to Naba Ouondé, who is to them a somewhat remote god.

794 It must be added that Lieutenant Desplagnes found among the
782 Mossi an esoteric cult of the sun, moon, and fire, which is peculiar to religious initiates (Ouango) whom we shall mention later.

"The Hougho-Ouango of the Mossi (among the Mossi, those priests reside in the villages of Boujema, Mani, Kondogho, Yolo, and Tio) sacrifice to the sun in order to bind it to the Earth. They do this morning and evening, sunrise and sunset, during the first week of the winter season, and every six days in the morning at sunrise thereafter.
[778] They also go to altars made of three conical stones and offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by the populace, family heads, drummers, and familial masks (ouango).

794 "Those priests tend the sacred fire throughout the year in a
372 small, highly adorned recess dug into one of their house walls. At
783 the end of the rainy season they will use it to light the great purifying bush fires.

794 "They perform sacrifices at every new moon, and they have
782 seven important feasts a year for their divinity. Finally, during the solar festivities, they use a cow's tail to tie down the sun to the earth and to bind its life-giving heat." (Le Plateau central nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

nigérien /The Central Nigerian Plateau/, pages 275 and 276.)

The Mossi sacrifice to evil spirits (kinkirga in the singular, kinkirsi in the plural). In Mossi villages, when the cold weather begins, the oldest man in the village performs a sacrifice to avert the wrath of evil spirits. These are indeed fearsome, for among other things they cause the storms, the fierce winds that lay flat the millet and maize. Those spirits usually live in the bush and inhabit in particular the kankalra trees (lenga in Mandé), to which the Mossi offer sacrifices but whose leaves they nevertheless eat. There are Mossi who can see the kinkirsi and who have fights with them.

Now, let us say a word about the priestly organization of the Mossi.

/591/ First of all, among the Mossi as among other Blacks, there are soothsayers and makers of grigris. The soothsayers are called bara and the grigri makers timisoba, meaning "grigri chiefs," from timi, "grigri" and soba, "chief." This is exactly the same word formation as that of basitigui in Bambara.

Prior to the French occupation there were considerable numbers of bara among the Mossi, at least one for every village. Since the arrival of the Whites, however, they are much fewer. The bara disclose things with the aid of some earth. Since they only charge a few cowries for a consultation, they till the soil during the winter season and even work at a trade during the dry season, for example at shoemaking or weaving. They teach the bara's calling to their children.

The timisoba, although less numerous than the bara, do not make a living by making grigris either. They, too, till the soil and work at a trade. They only make grigris on order and do not make them up in advance.

The timisoba goes into the bush and cuts out the roots of certain trees. He burns them and puts the charcoal in bags which he hangs either inside or outside his hut. This charcoal is or becomes grigri. In order to make other objects into grigris, he reduces the charcoal to powder, mixes it with karité butter, and marks with it all the objects he wishes to make into grigris, such as cow's tails, deer horns, sheep horns, etc. This charcoal powder is put to all sorts of uses. The timisoba even mixes it with his millet flour and eats it.

the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way perpetuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privileges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly, a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou. Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey. Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys the same privileges.)

We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer. There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

"Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory. Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French, the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta. This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls.

Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

585 On the appointed day the fiancé sends two men of his family, one of whom is usually his brother, to fetch his bride. These two natives [431] come to the home of the family head with 13 canari /jars/ of dolo. Then the feasting begins.

The father takes his daughter to the hut of the ancestors, cuts the [782] throat of a chicken on the fetish stone so the future marriage will be happy, and discloses to her the name of her husband.

The young fiancée, escorted by two old women of her family and the two emissaries of her fiancé, proceed to the latter's home.

For four days the young bride will stay in a hut alone with the old women. During this period, the old women give her all the customary advice and show her the course of behavior she must follow to please her future spouse.

The bridegroom comes every day to greet the old women, but during this interview the young girl takes great care to hide her face from him.

On the third day, in the evening, the husband has a sheep and goat slaughtered. He chooses a leg of mutton which he puts aside with the [252] animal's skin, and he has a large quantity of sarabou /millet mush/ cooked along with the remaining meat. He takes the whole thing to the old women. They distribute the sarabou among all the members of the family and carefully put aside the leg of mutton and the skin which they will take on the following day to the girl's mother to show her that her daughter has indeed been delivered to her husband.

Then the husband has his bride brought to his hut where the marriage is consummated.

There is nothing compulsory about this four-day waiting period. It happens frequently that the consummation of the marriage takes place on the day following the young girl's arrival. Occasionally it is delayed for several days when, as sometimes happens, an elderly fiancé gives the bride who was originally intended for him to his son or to some other member of the family.

The marriage is valid from the day of the departure of the old women who brought the girl to her husband's soukala.

The consummation of the marriage is by no means necessary to validate the union. If the husband neglects his new bride for too long, however (a year, for example), she may demand explanations." /240/

582 Impediments to marriage. —"The impediments to marriage," says Vadier, "are as follows.

562 When she dies, a woman's property goes to her children. The
428 objects used by women go to the daughters (bracelets, skirt cloths), while other items (animals, etc.)go to the sons. More exactly, the first-born is favored among the sons and the oldest girl among the daughters. If there are no children, the husband does not take anything, and whatever the wife leaves goes to her family, to her sisters and brothers in the first line of decent. Not having had any children by the deceased, the husband woud be ashamed to take what she left.

837 Adultery. —The wife owes faithfulness to her spouse. Unfaithfulness, however, is not very important, for unless it occurs repeatedly it does not usually result in a break. The husband merely beats his wife and scolds her.

837 When the wife has fled to a lover, her husband goes in search of
684 her. The lover will have to provide a sheep (the sheep may be re-
782 placed by a goat), a chicken, andtwo canari of dolo, all of which
769 are to be sacrificed to the ancestor so they will forgive the woman. She cannot re-enter her house until the sacrifice has been performed; without it the ancestors would kill her. They are unbending, more so than the husband to be sure, about the latter's honor. Should a husband know his wife to be guilty and do nothing about it, the ancestors would be furious and theywould kill him, hence the necessity for action on the husbands part.

837 If the husband cannot find his runaway wife, the duty of searching
684 for her and bringing her back to him falls to his father-in-law.

Formerly, before the French occupation, if the lover did not want to return the woman, her father appealed to the naba, that is, the chief of the village or canton, or even to the Moro Naba, who sent horsemen to arrest the guilty pair. He restored the wife to her husband and confiscated for his own benefit he lover's animals and millet granaries.

Nowadays, since the French occupation, one appeals to the commanding officer of the circle and tothe native provincial court for the wife's return.

684 Sometimes, in the past, the husband killed his wife's lover when
643 he caught him flagrante delicto. He had the right to do so, but this caused him to lose his /246/ wife who became the property of the Moro Naba. The lover's property likewise reverted to the Moro Naba.

684 In any event, the husband did not have the right to kill his wife
643 except when she was caught flagrante delicto, unless he was the
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Karême), celebrate the great festival of Ramadan and the lesser festivals, and aspire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Most of the Moslems can lead prayers, but only about one-tenth of their number can read and recite the Koran. However, today the masters (*karasambas*) of the 32 Koranic schools in the district are endeavoring to instruct the many boys and few girls in reading the Koran and understanding Moslem theology.

The Karême is observed by most adult Moslems in the community with the exception of invalids and working men. Moslems say that the fast is intended to turn the minds of the people to God, and they distinguish between the Moslems "of the mouth" who break the fast and those "of the heart" who fast until Ramadan. The crescent moon of Ramadan is greeted with guns and general rejoicing and the following morning the Moslems gather at the tomb of Ngado to give praises to God; during the rest of the day they pay homage to the chief and visit their friends. However, a change in the traditional observance of Ramadan is expected, because one of the Moslem leaders objects to the ceremony at the tomb of Ngado. He feels that some Moslems are beginning to regard the tomb of the first Moslem as an earth shrine or Tengkougre.

So far, only five of the more prominent Moslems in the district have made or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first man made the voyage about seven years ago, and is now conducting a Koranic school in a neighboring district. His brother went to Mecca about two years ago and is now the senior *El Hadj* in the district. Of the two men who were on the pilgrimage when I arrived in the district, one has since died near the Red Sea and the other is still away. One other man left for Mecca and returned to the district during my stay. Most of the pilgrims now fly to Mecca; only two men followed the traditional route through Ghana, Kano, Lake Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (now Sudan), and on to Mecca. In general, all pilgrims have used their own resources for the trip, but they receive some help from their lineage brothers and from the other Moslems in the district and in Ouagadougou.

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the greatest event in the lives of the district Moslems. When the last pilgrim left, a great crowd gathered at his house and prayed for his safe journey, and some even accompanied him to Ouagadougou and remained there until he left. The Moslems and many pagans of the district, under the command of the district chief, cultivated his fields during his absence. And when the new El Hadj returned, a large crowd accompanied him to his house with shouts of joy. There he killed a sheep in thanksgiving, sprinkled the crowd with holy water from Mecca, and recounted his experiences. His listeners were impressed by his airplane flight and the description of Mecca, but they showed the greatest interest when he said that Mecca women covered their faces and that most Meccan men were monogamous. The local Moslems smiled when they heard this bit of news from one of their members, but I have seen them scowl when discussing the monogamous practice desired by the Christians.

The attitudes of Moslems differ very little from those of the other Mossi as regards children and polygyny. They say that they do not believe in the

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the original segment of the ruling Biligo lineage had lived in Barkago for some time, it divided into two minor lineages and settled in two saghse, Natenga and Godin. A noble from Godin possessed the nam, but it eventually passed to a noble from Natenga. The new chief then founded a new saka called Kedpalago because he wanted more living space for his own children. As a result, the minor lineage of Natenga now had two babissi living in two saghse. The minor lineage of Godin subsequently declined in size and prestige. The only evidence of its former importance was that its eldest male continued to make separate sacrifices to his own chiefly ancestors, even though the more recent holders of the nam made sacrifices to all former chiefs. These independent sacrifices were made in spite of the fact that this minor lineage kept growing smaller because its male members left to live elsewhere or to join maternal patrilineages with higher status. The sacrifices were expected to cease only if and when the minor lineage were to disappear with the incorporation of the widows and orphans of its last surviving males into the other Biligo groups of the village and district. Of course, if the Godin minor lineage had regained the nam, it undoubtedly would have experienced a rebirth and renewal of strength. It might have attracted its daughter's sons, and even aliens who would have lived in its saghse as they did in those of the ruling lineage segments.

A fourth saka, Nakomgo ("we hunger after the nam"), was inhabited by the noble descendants of Naba Ngado, the district chief who had replaced the descendant of Naba Biligo of Nobere. Since these nobles traced their descent from two full brothers, Kouliga and Kongo, they formed two related minor lineages with five component minimal lineages. The compounds of the two babissi of the Kouliga minor lineage were separate but contiguous. Near them were the compounds of the three babissi of the Kongo minor lineage. Scattered about in the Nakomgo saka were compounds of sisters' sons, strangers, and nobles' slaves.

The people of Narila, the fifth saka of Barkago, were members of the aboriginal Ninisi population, and thus furnished the village's earth-priest. He made sacrifices to the earth shrines in the village, gave ritual permission for building compounds and digging graves, and took control of the village during the period between the death of a chief and the accession of another. Scattered throughout the various saghse were compounds inhabited by people of serf, slave, or refugee origin.

Of all the groups within the village, the Ngado people kept the most exact genealogies. They did so because one of the segments of their maximal lineage held the district nam, and as nobles they had theoretical access to it. Once they had lost the nam of the district, the descendants of Biligo

knew that Boukary Koutou was the only person capable of such a conspiracy. Fearing for their lives if they did not nominate him, they immediately sent a messenger to summon him as the successful candidate.[15] Under normal circumstances, however, there was no coercion of the ministers and the nominee was quietly brought to the councillors.

Wearing a pair of trousers and a sheepskin mantle and carrying a spear in each hand, the nominee entered the courtyard of the compound through the women's door.[16] He was preceded by the Samande.Nabila, who sprinkled the earth with water. He came up to the councillors and saluted them, and the Ouidi Naba addressed him as follows: "Before your father [brother] died, did he designate you to be his successor?" The nominee replied, "No, Sire! My father has left you free to choose whom you wish, be he a blind man or a leper!" This question was asked three times, and the nominee responded three times. The Ouidi Naba then made the following declaration: "I am giving you the nam of your father and grandfathers. You must try to conduct yourself as they did when they had the nam." The Ouidi Naba then listed the names of the territories over which the ruler had absolute power and authority. The new monarch raised his two spears in the air, made a speech in which he announced three guiding principles by which he vowed to reign, and "named a name," that is, suggested the title by which he wished to be known. For example, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) said in his inaugural speech: "Without rain, there is no life. I will be like rain for the country." He then became known as Mogho Naba Sagha ("Rain"), a rather fitting title for a ruler in a country with uncertain rainfall. The present Mogho Naba stressed in his inaugural speech (in 1957) that he was "solid as a rock." His official title is now Mogho Naba Kougri ("Rock").[17]

The taking of a new name was only the first step in the elaborate process through which a man became Mogho Naba. Next, the Ouidi Naba took the two spears from the new monarch and removed his sheepskin mantle. Then he gave him his new white clothes, which included a pair of trousers, a bonnet, and a sleeveless robe, all made for him by the people of the Sculougou ward in the capital. Next, he was given a cushion made by the people of Baramimi. The Baloum Naba then took the closely guarded namtibo, the sacred amulets of the dynasty, and used them in the preparation of a potion of millet beer mixed with millet-flour water, part of which was poured as a libation to the earth goddess, Tenga.[18] The ruler and the assembled ministers all partook of the potion in a kind of communion. The ministers then shook the ruler's hand, an act thereafter forbidden, and departed for their own compounds. The newly elected

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The Mogho Naba had an elaborate court composed of many officials, relatives, and servants. The most important courtiers were the five ministers, who appeared daily at court and took part in all important ceremonies in addition to administering their own provinces. Aside from these men, the Mogho Naba had a number of other officials called Naba whose responsibilities covered the full range of duties in the palace and in the capital. One of the most interesting was the Pwe Naba, a royal diviner and court chaperon. His chief duty was to guard the morals of the pages and the royal wives; he also administered the ordeal to persons accused of treason. The pages were required to be chaste until they were discharged from the palace, lest their amorous adventures lead them to compromise the virtue of the royal wives, with whom they were constantly in contact. A wife and a page suspected of adultery were tested by the Pwe Naba. He forced them to look into a mirror or a calabash of water, and declared them guilty or innocent according to the way their faces were reflected. If they were found guilty, the wife was executed and the page was either executed or discharged in disgrace. The Pwe Naba also saw to it that strangers did not address the ruler's wives either on the street or in the market. Offenders were executed.

The Dapore Naba served as the court's chief executioner and as head of a group of the Mogho Naba's hereditary serfs. Members of the royal clan were executed by strangulation, since royal blood could not be shed; all other persons were executed either with a sword, by hanging, or with heavy clubs. Another palace official was the Ouedrango Naba, the head groom. It was he who saddled and presented the king's ceremonial horse to him at the morning ceremony. The Kambo Naba commanded the palace guard; only he and his guards were permitted to carry guns. The Samande Naba and the Samande Nabila supervised the work of the samande-kamba, young men who worked around the palace courtyard and kept watch with heavy batons to enforce order during ceremonies. A lesser palace official was the Zusoaba Kasanga, who, as chief of the palace eunuchs, ruled over the guardians of the royal harem. The Gande Naba made sacrifices for the ruler and also distributed gifts from the king to the royal officials and the royal household.

Another courtier, and one who played an important role during the installation of the new ruler, was the Ouagadougou Naba. As a direct descendant of the Ninisi, he was all but indispensable at sacrifices propitiating or honoring his ancestors. The Bendere Naba was the chief musician and court historian; according to some reports, a Bendere Naba was killed instantly if he made a mistake while reciting the ruler's genealogy. The Raga Naba was chief of the markets in the capital. Under him were

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fathers died. In this way the rulers not only retained the allegiance of the boys' fathers but had a unique opportunity to determine whether these boys were qualified to succeed to the nam.

The life of a page was confining, even if sometimes very rewarding. Pages were bound by the demands of the ruler, whose every wish had to be satisfied immediately. A quarrelsome ruler was a terror to his pages, who had to bear silently his insults and blows. On the other hand, a considerate monarch permitted or encouraged his pages to profit from the small political intrigues in which they were invariably involved. Prospective district chiefs "made friends" with pages to find out whether their suits were progressing, or to whom they might usefully offer gifts. The pages used any money they might procure to buy clothes for themselves, to supplement the clothing and presents they received from their relatives. Every page was "adopted" by one of the royal wives, who prepared his meals and took care of him. In return, he helped this woman cultivate her field when his presence was not required by the monarch. When a page completed his service satisfactorily, he received a pughsiudga as a wife. If his work had not been satisfactory, he was simply dismissed.

The only woman who played any significant role at the court of the Mogho Naba was the Pughtiema, his head wife. She was the only wife to whom he presented his friends, and whom he allowed his subjects to visit. This woman, who was commonly the widow of the former Mogho Naba, was often chosen because she was past childbearing age: she was thus older and wiser than the other wives, less preoccupied with children, and above the sexual jealousies that may often develop in polygynous households. She arbitrated among the wives and stood *in loco parentis* to the younger ones, whom she instructed and advised. She served also as official hostess to the ancestors during the annual propitiatory ritual. It was her duty to prepare the millet beer and millet water for the sacrifices to the ancestors, who were believed to feast at her hut before they visited the rest of the household. In addition, it was she who prepared to accompany the Mogho Naba to La each day. Lastly, it was her duty to introduce any new royal wife to the ancestors, and to ask them to watch over this potential mother of their descendants.

The ruler inherited some of his wives from his father; some he received from his many friends and vassals; and others he selected from among his pughsiudse. Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890–96) allegedly had a hundred wives. Crozat did not see this many women at Wobogo's court, understandably, since most of a ruler's wives lived in villages, where they were guarded by eunuchs.[23] Of the substantial number of royal wives

643 763 [645] [793] the Tansoba, the members of the royal sub-lineage, and the district chiefs. The Tengsoba of the Ouagadougou area was also notified. Because he was a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi population that "owned" the land, he supervised the burial ceremony.

[701] The Mogho Naba's death was kept secret, and no mourning was allowed until the Crown Prince had arrived at the capital and the Tansoba had recruited an army to protect the realm against would-be usurpers of power. Then the cry was raised in the palace, to reverberate throughout the land, 643 764 669 that "the fire had gone out." Once the ruler's death had been announced, the country was plunged into an interregnum, which was characterized by ritual and often by actual anarchy. The people in the towns immediately looted the markets and stole their neighbors' goods; the prisoners and captives in stocks were released by their guards; the nakomce in all the territories, districts, and villages subjected the local populations to robbery and pillage; and the members of the monarch's babissi began their intrigues for power. The traditional sanction for this anarchy was that only when people suffer during the breakdown of political control do they really appreciate the sovereign's role. The Mossi declare (with some truth) that no one was safe during the interregnum. However, as we shall see, the ruler was symbolically kept alive, and the country was never without effective political leadership.

766 644 643 When the Tengsoba arrived at the palace, he was joined by five hereditary funeral chiefs: the Pazany'tengsoba, the Tampouy Naba, the Benghin Naba, the Toghin Naba, and the Tanghin Naba. In the ceremony that followed, he gave permission for the royal grave to be dug. Meanwhile, the ruler's body was prepared for burial in the traditional manner by his female relatives and laid in state in the zongo. These women kept vigil over the body, shouting and weeping. Only the five ministers of the realm and the male members of the ruler's babissi were allowed to pay homage to the corpse within the zongo. All other mourners had to pay their respects to the monarch's eldest daughter, who, as Napoko, was dressed in the dead sovereign's clothes and sat in his place before the zongo. As her father's symbolic representative, she held daily court and received greetings and homage from all visitors until a new ruler was chosen. The drummer who sat by her side declared to all visitors, "You say that the Mogho Naba is dead! Well, who is that sitting there? Tell me! Is that not the Mogho Naba?"

766 643 [782] The ruler was buried the day after he died, at the end of an elaborate ceremony. Libations were poured out to the ancient rulers, and sacrifices made to them. All the important officials and members of the royal mini-

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mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms. [761]

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Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[33] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants. [171] [435] [634]

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The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end. [782] [788]

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All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[34] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy.

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It was only when this man had returned to the capital that all the nobles in the local ruling lineage were invited to Ouagadougou to press their claims. Only the dead chief's babissi went to Ouagadougou, even though all nobles subscribed to the traditional concept that "the nam does not belong to any one sub-lineage; it can be given to any nobleman." Unlike the others, these nobles did not shave their heads in mourning, thus indicating their candidacy for the nam. When they donned sheepskin cloaks and carried spears on their shoulders, they indicated that they were interested in the nam of the district.

Before a candidate for the district chieftainship left for Ouagadougou, he collected livestock, money, clothing, and grain from his friends to give as gifts or bribes to important officials in the capital. When he arrived there, he lived with friends and conducted his campaign from their home. He and the other candidates visited their provincial minister and his colleagues, the Mogho Naba, and other courtiers, giving presents ostensibly as a sign of friendship but actually with the ultimate aim of impressing these people with their generosity. These activities were often very costly; for if the Ouagadougou officials suspected that the candidates were wealthy, they made every effort to obtain as many presents as possible. It was not unusual for candidates for the district chieftainship to remain at the capital as long as "thirty-three" or "sixty-six" days before the officials were satisfied with their generosity and made preparations for the election.

The evening before the election, the Baloum Naba asked each candidate to provide a chicken and a sheep for the evening sacrifices to the namtibo.[38] After the morning ceremony on the following day, the Ouidi Naba reminded the sovereign that a new chief had to be chosen for Nobere district. The Mogho Naba summoned the Gounga Naba and asked him which candidate had the best character and was most capable of taking care of the district—a question which shows that the Mossi never placed primogeniture above the ability to rule.[39] The Gounga Naba had already consulted his friends about the matter, but he recounted both the good and the bad qualities of each candidate. At the same time, he hinted which one would make the best chief. He finally told the Mogho Naba that all of the candidates were worthy men, adding, "You can give the nam to any of them." The Mogho Naba then looked around to ascertain whether the other ministers had concurred in the Gounga Naba's implied choice before declaring, "I will give the nam to X, because when his [father, grandfather, or brother, used in the generic or classificatory sense] was alive, he was good to me. The ancestors would be angry if I did not give his [son, grandson, or brother] the nam." With these words the selection was made, and the ministers now prepared to install the successful candidate.

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643 651 796 become overgrown with grass and weeds during the rainy season. This clearing was done to within a few yards of the palace, but was not completed. Early in the morning of the day chosen for the actual rendering of the agricultural tribute, the retainers placed baskets of produce along these paths. During the morning ceremony, the Ouidi Naba presented a basket of millet to the Mogho Naba. Then the Bendere Naba, acting as Sore Naba ("chief of the road"), signaled on his drum, and the men with baskets who were waiting on the uncleared portion of the paths, preceded by drummers and men with hoes, axes, and other tools, began to move forward. The men in the processions raised a din, shouting, singing, drumming, and pretending that the task of clearing was very difficult. From time to time, the more energetic among those who were not carrying bundles ran ahead of the others, turned somersaults, and then, going through the motions of warriors in battle, pranced back into the procession. All the processions came to the shed occupied by the royal drummers and deposited their burdens. These were later retrieved by the palace staff and stored for use in the royal household.

643 644 241 The royal household was also supplied with produce grown by the royal wives. Foodstuffs for guests and fodder for the ruler's horses were provided by the people of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, which were under the general supervision of the Kam Naba. Two or three times during the agricultural season, this official recruited extra help from these wards to help [464] [465] cultivate the fields. In recompense for this *sosogha* (work bee), the laborers were given food, drink, and kola nuts from the royal household. At the 243 643 644 end of the year, the harvesting and threshing of the grain from the Mogho Naba's fields was the occasion for an elaborate ceremony, "Mogh Nab' kawinre" ("threshing the ruler's grain").[2]

796 [791] [792] To begin this ceremony, the Mogho Naba summoned a local earth-priest, the Manougoudougou Tengsoba, to the court. This man, a descendant of the Ninisi, had to perform the propitiatory sacrifices to the earth deity who was symbolized by the threshing floor. After the sacrifices were completed, the Kam Naba went to the threshing floor with the young men of the Bilbalgo and Dapoya wards, who threshed the millet gathered there. The next morning they all returned to the threshing floor with the Bendere Naba and his minstrels, who recited the Mogho Naba's genealogy and sang praises to his ancestors. The drummers then beat out work rhythms and traditional drum patterns to which the workers danced while scattering the millet far and wide. Finally, the dancing stopped, and the Kam Naba drew a line on the threshing floor, dividing the pile of millet in two; the Bilbalgo people gathered one half, the Dapoya people the other. Regard-

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ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

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went to the home of his Samande Naba, the next to the Gounghin ward, then to Baghin, and subsequently to the homes of other officials. He could not remain long at one place for fear that the ancestors might find him. Every morning, however, when the cock's crow heralded the ancestors' departure, he returned to his palace.

The principal part of the Basgha ceremony was performed on the night when the crescent moon appeared. On that night more than any other, the ruler had to seek refuge elsewhere, because the ancestors visited the palace to accept the sacrifices offered to them by the Pughtiema with the help of the Baloum Naba and the chief eunuch of the harem. The exact nature of this ceremony is unknown, but it is known that the Baloum Naba used the sacred namtibo along with animals and millet-flour water provided by the Pughtiema and the chief eunuch for propitiatory sacrifices to the ancestors. The aim of these sacrifices was to induce the ancestors to grant good crops, health, happiness, and children to their descendants, and to "increase the force of the namtibo."[1] At cock's crow the Bendere Naba sprinkled a flour infusion called *gningmassem* ("water of health") on the palace courtyard so that the ruler might walk upon it when he returned. The Mogho Naba was greeted with drumbeats and escorted to the palace gate. His entry into the antechamber marked the close of this ceremony, and the people retired until later in the day.

The elaborate public ceremony of the Basgha took place in mid-morning. The ministers and important officials, clad in ceremonial garb, arrived at the palace quite early. When the Mogho Naba appeared, the Bendere Naba recited the official genealogy, starting with Ouedraogo and Oubri and ending with elaborate praises of the current ruler. The ministers and their entourage then saluted the Mogho Naba and wished him *Ne tarbo*, which means a happy and prosperous new year for himself and the country. He, in turn, took advantage of this occasion to give many presents to his retinue, and his wives distributed huge amounts of food and drink to the assembly until everyone was satiated. Then all the officials except the Bendere Naba and his group paid homage to the Mogho Naba and departed. The musicians remained at court most of the day, beating their drums and singing praises to their sovereign and his illustrious ancestors. The royal pages kept them well supplied with food and beer, and now and again during the day the ruler sent them gifts among which robes were often included. Whenever the drummers received a gift, they slipped into a rhythmic pattern that signified: *Tompaongo, Wend'kaoust' Naba niore, Wenne wilig yinre*, or, "We bow in thanksgiving for your gift. May God give the ruler long life. May God grant us to be alive next year so that we may do this again." The

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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[2] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

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pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[8]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[9] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

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provided the sacrificial animals for the royal tombs in the area of the capital, and the Ouagadougou Naba, as chief Tengsoba, performed the sacrifices. The Larhalle Naba also dispatched his servants to the distant districts where royal tombs were located, with orders to obtain (by force, if necessary) the animals for the sacrifices from the local populations and give them to the special guardians of the tombs. Sacrifices were made on the grave of Naba Oubri at Koudougou and on that of his father, Zoungourana, in the village of Zomtoega in Tenkodogo. However, there is no indication that a sacrifice was made on the grave of Ouedraogo, who is believed to have died in Sagabatenga but whose burial place is unknown. Nor is it clear whether, as some Mossi claim, annual sacrifices were made on the alleged grave of Nyennega in Gambaga. As soon as these preparatory sacrifices had been completed and the Mogho Naba had been notified, preparations were made for the celebration.

The Mogho Naba met with the Larhalle Naba, and the date of the Tense was set for twenty-one days after the meeting. On the following day, the Larhalle Naba made five cords out of tree bark and tied nineteen knots in each of them. The next day, he gave each provincial minister a cord to send to the districts in his province. The provincial ministers then sent their messengers with the cords to the districts, with orders to untie one knot every day the cords were in transit. Thus a district chief, counting the number of knots in the cord on the day it reached him, knew how many days were left before the Tense. As soon as the entire kingdom had been notified of the festival, the envoys returned to Ouagadougou and returned the cords to their ministers.

On the Friday morning before the Tense, the Larhalle Naba went to the palace. Kneeling before the monarch, he untied the last knot on each cord to indicate that the ceremony would begin on the morrow. To acknowledge this fact, the Mogho Naba distributed bars of salt to his courtiers and visitors instead of the customary kola nuts, beer, and millet water. Visitors left the court early in order to provide their families with foodstuffs for the celebration.

Early on Saturday morning, royal servants brought huge quantities of beef and mutton that had been cooked without pepper (this spice being disliked by the ancestors) and other foods, and deposited them in large heaps in the courtyard. Nearby, they also placed numerous large pots of millet beer. As soon as the morning ceremony was over, the Larhalle Naba slowly approached the Mogho Naba, who presented him with a new white robe. The minister donned the robe and walked to the piles of food, from which he took three portions of millet mush, dipped them in a specially

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prepared sauce, and flung them in three directions to the waiting ancestral spirits. He then beseeched the royal spirits, the spirits of former provincial ministers, and the spirits of the ancient people (the Ninisi) to grant a long life to the Mogho Naba and peace to all the Mossi. He repeated the ritual with three morsels of meat and with the contents of a pot of beer. When he had finished, the Gande Naba picked up the food thrown to the ancestors and carried it away. He did not look backward for fear that he should see the ancestors and die as a result. The departure of the Gande Naba was the signal for the palace retainers to rush toward the food. They seized and ate what they could, spilling and wasting a good deal in the process.[5]

Meanwhile, chiefs and headmen held similar ceremonies in every district, village, hamlet, and compound in the Ouagadougou kingdom. District and village chiefs offered sacrifices to their ancestors in the name of their subjects. The sacrifices on the hamlet and compound level were more specific. Every grown man had to take a sheep, goat, or chicken to his elder and request that it be offered to the ancestors in his name. The elder sacrificed the animal and beseeched the ancestors to grant the petitioner good health, bountiful crops, and many children during the coming year. The women and children did not take part in the ritual, but they did participate in the general feasting that followed.

The festivities of the Tense lasted only a few days in the districts and villages, but in the capital it did not end officially until about four weeks had elapsed. At the end of this period, the Larhalle Naba gave the Mogho Naba all the cords that had been used to mark the coming of the Tense. A few days later, the chief Tengsoba of Guillingou, the native village of Oubri's mother, and the Tengsobadamba of other important ceremonial centers, visited the Mogho Naba in the palace courtyard. Here they all sacrificed white cocks and placed the blood and feathers of their victims on their ceremonial axes in order to "increase the power" of these objects. Later on, they were given cooked mutton, millet cakes, and other presents. Their departure for home later in the day marked the close of the Tense.

The religio-political function of the Tense is quite explicit, despite the statement by Dim Delobson, himself a Mossi chief (but also a convert to Catholicism), that "it is apparent that this festival has no outstanding features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead, and, in the process, to allow everyone to enjoy the food."[6] Judging by the reports of old men who participated in the festival before it was banned, the people did have a good time and enjoyed the food. What is important, however, is that like the Basgha, the Tense served not only "to make peace

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between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage reportedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Sabatenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[1]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[2]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled spirits.

spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the villagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people." In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the conquerors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional religious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

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soba (earth priest) who must be also a *barga* (soothsayer) to find out where in a certain area it would be most propitious to locate the new market. After the *tengsoba* has ascertained the number and nature of the *tengkouga* (earth deities, plural of *Tengkougri)* in the designated spot, he tells the *Raga Naba* what type of sacrifice would be appropriate. A few days later the *Raga Naba*, his young assistant and the *tengsoba* take *zom kom* (milletflour), *dam* (sorghum beer), and a chicken (or goat) of the designated color, and go to the new market place. Here they pick out the stone or three which is the abode of the spirit or spirits, if there are several of them, and prepare to make the offering. The *Raga Naba* takes the millet water and pours some on the ground saying: "Good God, take this water, drink it, and take this other water (here he pours the beer), and give it to all the *tengkouga* in the villages so that the market will aways be good and there will be no fighting in the market!" Then the *Raga Naba* takes the sacrificial animal, and in the case of a chicken pulls off the neck feathers and cuts its throat, saying: "Good God, take this chicken and heed all the prayers of the people of this market!" He releases the chicken and waits to see whether it will fall on its back, thereby indicating whether the petition has been accepted. Of course, if it has not been accepted, a new site is chosen. If the sacrifice has been accepted, then the *Raga Naba* gives the chicken to his young helper to be cleaned and roasted. He then prays to the *tengkouga* who live in the market place and begs them to help with the market. When the boy brings back the dissected chicken, the *Raga Naba* cuts the liver into two parts; one for God and the other for the local *tengkouga*. He then says, "Now that God and the *Tengkouga* have eaten, they should drink," and forthwith pours out the remainder of the millet water. The *Raga Naba* then distributes the remainder of the roasted chicken among those present saying, "*Winnam dege* (God has accepted the sacrifice)." Only after this ceremony is completed can the market be opened.[9]

All Mossi markets, except those which specialize in one type of trading, have the same basic physical structure even though they vary in size from one-eighth of an acre to as much as four or five acres. We do not know the size of some of the traditional markets such as Pouitenga, La, Yako, Dakay, Belousa, Mane, and Tema, but we have Crozat's report that "The market at Wagadougou, which is found at Kounkounbissi, the royal residence ... is large" (Crozat 1891 : 4848). Since the market at Wagadougou was smaller than some of the other important ones, we may assume that some of the markets must have been quite large. At the same time, the physical appurtenances of Mossi markets are not elaborate, or were not so until today. In the

(9) See Zahan (1954 : 371) and Mangin (1921 : 55).

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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

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443 554 776 782 due to the bickering, quarreling and even fighting they have to prevent by cooling the tempers of the market people—that they become quite angry. When the spirits are not satisfied, they fail in their tasks and real trouble breaks out in the market, disrupting the trading; and if they are not pacified they may even cause the death of the market officials.[12]

In the days before the market officials were banned, these sacrifices were performed regularly. At that time the Raga Naba simply asked the Kos Naba to seize the appropriate animal in the market to perform [648] the rite. The problem today is that since the French have abolished the office of Raga Naba, and in some districts have prevented the chief from even naming one secretly, the markets in the latter local- [208] ities are considered "dangerous markets." Once a market acquires such a reputation, people do not like to visit it because they fear that they would get into fights or quarrels. Not only this, but it is believed that if a market has been without a Raga Naba for a long time, the *tengkouga* there become so angry for being neglected that they kill [123] the first chief appointed to it. This was the reality or belief behind a series of misadventures of which I was the victim.

123 443 554 656 I had spent an entire day in a market, and on returning home could not find my pen. The next morning I sent an assistant to the chief telling him about the loss and asking him to have an announcement made in the market on the next market day that I would pay a handsome reward to whomever should find and deliver the pen. The chief sent back a reply saying that since there was no Raga Naba, he would have the Kos Naba acquaint the people with my loss. On the day of the market, I waited until midday, when most of the people had arrived, and then went to see whether the Kos Naba had any news of the pen. I checked with several of my friends to see whether they had heard about the pen and discovered, to my chagrin, that no an- [567] nouncement had been made about it. I went and told the Kos Naba that the people were not hearing about the pen and suggested that one way to do so would be to have the Binderes (drummers and griots) circulate through the market announcing the loss. The Kos Naba refused to do this, and when I enlisted the aid of the chief's secretary, he, too, said that it could not be done because there was no Raga Naba. I had some notes on the institution of the Raga Naba, but as I did not know everything about it, I was, therefore, frankly puzzled

(12) Zahan (1954 : 371) states that "the place where all kinds of merchandise accumulate and where strangers come is a place charged with forces. In time, these forces build up to such a point within the precincts of the market that some purifications are necessary to liberate them. To omit making them would expose the participants to excitements leading to brawls and compromising the place of the transactions."

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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to expain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the cowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga*, he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his